

**OMAR KHAYYAM**

# بنام خداوند بخشنده

آنها را بحدی در معنی می بینند در بار خداوند سخن می گویند

سرشته اسرارند از کتب اولی که در دنیا آفرینند

وله ایضا

آنها را خلاصه جهان بشنند راجح فلک را بگویند

در معرفت از تو مانند فلک سرشته و سرنگ و سرگردانند

وله

آنان را که نبیند و آنان را نبیند هر یک را بحدی در معنی می بینند

در حد جهان بگویند و در حد عالم در حد دیر و در حد آمد و روند

ایضا

که کل موجود نصیب ما خدا نیست در نور عالم می بیند و در است

که خرقه و خاندان و شیخی نبود تا قوس و کلیسا و در است

ایضا

بارت که سرشته من حلقم بشم و قصیم تو دشته من حلقم

هر یک را بحدی در معنی می بیند تو بگو و من بگو

# OMAR KHAYYÁM

*A New Version Based upon  
Recent Discoveries*

*by*

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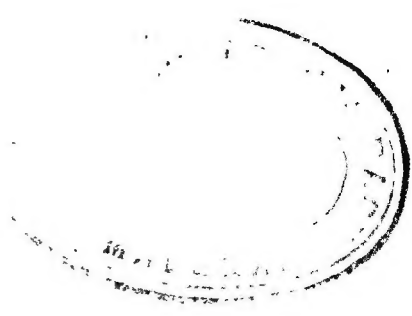
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*Frontispiece:* THE FIRST PAGE OF THE CAMBRIDGE MS.  
OF OMAR KHAYYÁM DATED 604 (1207)

★

WOOD ENGRAVING BY REYNOLDS STONE





## Introduction

THE universal fame of Omar Khayyám is surely a unique phenomenon in the history of literature, in the sense that his name would certainly never have been known to any but a few specialists outside the country of his birth, and little celebrated in Persia, had it not been for the quite astounding popularity of the translation of his poems made by Edward FitzGerald. What makes the story all the more astonishing is the fact that FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát* would itself in all likelihood have taken a humble place among the half-forgotten products of minor Victorian literature, if not been totally neglected, but for the chance interest taken in it by powerful critics of his day. The details of the "discovery" are well known, but always bear repeating. In the words of his editor in Everyman's Library, "His *Omar Khayyám*, after being offered in vain to *Fraser's Magazine*, had been published by Quaritch as a small quarto, without the author's name. It gained no notice, and most of the two hundred copies found their way into a remainder box, and were sold at a penny each . . . Rossetti and Swinburne were among the early buyers, and Swinburne took a copy triumphantly to George Meredith, and so the first discovery of its original value came about. A second revised edition followed ten years later." The first edition was issued in 1859, the second in 1868, the third in 1872, the fourth in 1879, the fifth (in FitzGerald's *Collected Works*) in 1889; twenty other editions appeared before the close of the century; and the poem has maintained its extraordinary vogue ever since; there can scarcely be a household in all Britain which has not at some time possessed a copy in some shape or form. British soldiers have taken it with them into action in two world wars.

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Yet the position of Omar Khayyám in the world of letters, at the time when FitzGerald happened upon him, was well described by his first translator. "For whatever Reason . . . Omar . . . has never been popular in his own country, and therefore has been but scantily transmitted abroad. The MSS, of his Poems, mutilated beyond the average Casualties of Oriental Transcription, are so rare in the East as scarce to have reached Westward at all, in spite of all the acquisitions of Arms and Science." And so Omar might well have remained for all time; certainly it is most unlikely that professional scholars of Persian literature would have paid much attention to him, for there are many far more famous poets to engage their interest. But in time the wide popularity of the *Rubáiyát*, and its sheer commercial success, obliged scholars to notice Omar. It was quickly discovered, what FitzGerald in fact candidly confessed, that this was no ordinary translation; though based upon the Bodleian manuscript, dated 865 (1460-1), it drew upon various other sources, not exclusively of Omar himself; and the version was in many ways exceedingly free, far more than would be reckoned allowable had Omar written Greek or Latin. So began an exciting hunt for the originals of FitzGerald's stanzas, a sport which amused quite a number of ingenious people quite a long time.

Omar was by now a household name. The scholars ransacked libraries for other manuscripts, and found a wild discrepancy between the copies discovered. Many of the quatrains were attributed to many other poets besides Omar. In 1897 the Russian savant Zhukovsky published an article entitled "Wandering Quatrains of Omar Khayyám", which proved the beginning of a new and still more thrilling chase: he showed that of the 464 stanzas contained in the edition (Paris, 1867) of J. B. Nicolas, no fewer than 82 were elsewhere assigned to 39 different poets—a number later raised to 108 by the further investigations of E. Denison Ross and the Danish scholar A. Christensen. After many others had contributed



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their much or little to this international discussion, Christensen, who in 1904 had admitted only 12 quatrains as genuinely Omar's, in 1927 moderated his opinion to the extent of allowing 121, out of 1,231 known to be ascribed, as reasonably authentic. In doing so he noted the views of E. G. Browne and R. A. Nicholson; the former stated that "The upshot of the whole inquiry is that, while it is certain that 'Umar Khayyám wrote many quatrains, it is hardly possible, save in a few exceptional cases, to assert positively that he wrote any particular one of those ascribed to him"; while the latter added, "As time passed and the texts grew in size, larger accretions of alloy must have continually gathered round the true 'Umarian metal, which has come down to us indeed, but so effectually hidden that 'Umar himself might be puzzled to find it again." Christensen's moderate generosity to Omar's genius was not allowed to go unchallenged; H. A. Schaefer for instance is reported to have declared in 1934 that Omar wrote virtually nothing, and that "his name must be struck out of the history of Persian literature."

The chief argument used by scholars challenging Omar's authorship of the *Rubáiyát* was the striking fact that, of the manuscripts of his poems hitherto known, the earlier their date the fewer the verses they contained. The Bodleian codex used by FitzGerald, with its 158 quatrains, continued for many years to be the most ancient, and this was written 328 or, according to the recent researches of Dr. C. Rempis, 338 years after Omar's death. As the splendid Istanbul libraries came to be examined, several other copies from the fifteenth century were brought to light; one, of exactly the same age as the Bodleian manuscript, had 315 quatrains, whereas another four years its senior possessed only 131. It was noticed that the total rose rapidly in copies of the sixteenth and later centuries; nothing much earlier than 1460 was found. Then in 1925 the German scholar F. Rosen published a copy bearing the date 721 (1321), with 329 quatrains; but the antiquity of this

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manuscript was immediately questioned, and there is no reasonable doubt that the transcription belongs to the sixteenth or even the seventeenth century.

It fell to the eminent Persian savant Mirza Mohammed Qazvini to be the first to discover a manuscript genuinely of the fourteenth century containing poems by Omar; this was an anthology dated 741 (1340), and it was noticed as highly significant that only 13 quatrains were given to Omar. C. Rempis followed up this find with the discovery of an anthology ten years older, containing 33 quatrains. After careful sifting of texts in which Omar was quoted, by authors writing up to the end of the fourteenth century, the view generally held by European specialists was that Christensen's allowance of 121 was far too liberal, and that Omar was indeed a very minor poet, in fact no more than a convenient peg upon which had been hung any quatrain of a slightly sceptical or hedonistic character. On the other hand Mohammed Ali Furughi, Prime Minister of Persia, after considering all the evidence assembled in the West and having ransacked his own country's libraries for new materials, in his edition of 1321 (1942) claimed 178 quatrains for Omar; still a comparatively low figure, but much more than Western scholars would agree upon at that time. The Russian-born expert V. Minorsky summed up the position in the *Encyclopædia of Islam* as follows: "The upshot of the preceding story is that we possess nothing approaching a *recensio recepta* of Khayyám's poetical works. What should we say, if for characteristics of a historical personality we had his correspondence in which scarcely a single letter could be authenticated and many were decidedly spurious?"

So matters stood after half a century's intensive investigation, in which eminent scholars of many nationalities had enthusiastically shared. Omar, now relegated to a quite insignificant position in the history of Persian literature, had

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enjoyed a degree of attention far exceeding that bestowed on all the other poets of Persia put together, all on account of the accident that FitzGerald had put out in his name a string of just over 100 quatrains which were acclaimed as a masterpiece of English writing. Many poets or poetasters had meanwhile vainly sought to emulate FitzGerald's success in many languages, and the popular cult of Omar had grown to quite fantastic proportions. But the book of scientific inquiry appeared to be closed; all that remained, at most, was a reconsideration of a few points of detail. Omar studies had assembled a bibliography worthy of a major Classical poet; the subject had been exhausted; nothing was left but an arid field scarce worth ploughing again.

It was therefore with no ordinary curiosity that I heard, some little while since, of the existence of a manuscript of the *Rubáiyât*, just then acquired by that great bibliophile Mr. Chester Beatty, reported as antedating very considerably all known copies, and of a certain modest size. It needed only one glance at the handwriting, paper and ink, to be quite convinced that the date in the colophon was authentic. In 658 (1259-60) a scribe calling himself Mohammed al-Qawam of Nishapur—Omar's own birthplace—had made, seemingly in his old age, a little volume consisting of 172 quatrains; and the phrasing he employed on the title-page suggested that this was in fact a *selection* of the poems of Omar. The text of this manuscript, which included eight quatrains not hitherto reported, was edited by me with a short critical apparatus and a literal translation, and published at Mr. Chester Beatty's expense early in 1950. No sooner had I handed over the copy of this book to the printers than an article appeared in the Teheran literary review *Yādgār*, unsigned but believed to be by the pen of Professor Abbas Iqbal, announcing the discovery in private ownership of a copy of the *Rubáiyât* dated 604 (1207), and giving some specimens of its contents. I was able to insert some references to this new find into the proofs

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of my edition of the Chester Beatty manuscript, but was not in the position to do anything more at that time, nor indeed did I suppose that it would ever be open to me to do so.

But Omar had not yet finished with me. In the Summer of 1950 the "Teheran" manuscript suddenly appeared in London and was offered for sale to Cambridge University Library. So for a second time I was first at the scene of a sensational acquisition. Again a single glance was enough; the date 604 was genuine. The Cambridge copy, also described on its title-page, and in its colophon, as a selection, comprised 252 quatrains; and this written only 75 years after Omar's death. It was a part of an anthology of early Persian poets, transcribed by a certain Ghiyāth al-Dīn Mohammed ibn Yūsuf ibn 'Alī; the calligraphy was thoroughly characteristic of its period, and the binding appeared almost contemporary. As in the Chester Beatty manuscript, the date was written out at length in words, not given in numerals, and there was no sign that the writing had been tampered with.

So it fell to the extraordinary fortune of one and the same man, not hitherto particularly interested in Omar studies, to be the first European scholar to handle the two oldest and most important Omar manuscripts ever discovered. It was already obvious from the Chester Beatty manuscript that the prevailing theory of widespread false attribution was no longer tenable; therefore the possibility once more existed that Omar really was a substantial poet, and that it would be a grave injustice for his name to be "struck out of the history of Persian literature." The Cambridge codex fully endorsed the necessity of making an entire re-estimate of Omar's position. There was first of all the most significant fact of its being described as a *selection* of the poems; and a selection amounting to 252 items points to a *corpus* of at least 750. Secondly, the Cambridge manuscript put Omar in company with other poets, including Sanā'i, who cannot by any stretch of the imagination be described as of minor importance; therefore

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the copyist, a well-read man writing within 75 years of Omar's death, regarded him as much more than a trivial poet. Thirdly, there would hardly have been time in 75 years to build up an almost mythical figure into an author of perhaps 750 quatrains; it would be impossible to point to any parallel to such a phenomenon in the whole of Persian literature; not even the text of *Hāfiz* suffered from inflation to anything like such an extent, and it is obviously more attractive to assign poems to a famous author than to one of merely imaginary importance. On these counts, therefore, the conclusion seems to be inescapable that Omar did in fact compose a large number of quatrains. The field of research, so far from being barren, has suddenly been wholly revitalised.

The first question now arising is again: which of the poems attributed to Omar are really his? From this follow other problems: why is there such a hiatus in the transmission, so that we have to wait two centuries before the poems are again transcribed in bulk? If Omar was regarded as a very considerable poet in 1207, what happened to his reputation afterwards and why was his fame eclipsed? These are very interesting puzzles, and will require a longish time to elucidate in full; perhaps no complete solution will ever be discoverable. At the moment these posers are so new that only a speculative reply can be offered.

Let us take the question of authorship first, and indicate some of the immediately relevant facts that need to be considered. A comparison of the Cambridge (hereafter called C) and the Chester Beatty (CB) manuscripts reveals that CB is a partial copy of C; not only are all its 172 quatrains present in the older codex, but the arrangement of the poems and many of the eccentric (but probably correct) readings are also to be found in C; the arrangement indeed differs in places, but only in such a way as to suggest either that some of the folios of C were formerly bound up in another order, or that the copyist

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of CB sometimes went back and forth in his reading of C. A more detailed examination of the incidental variations in the order of the poems, and a consideration of the reasons why 172 quatrains were taken and 80 left—these are tasks of minute scholarship not so relevant to a general discussion, though interesting enough in themselves. A table comparing summarily the contents of the chief manuscripts and editions is in the appendix of the present volume. Here it will be sufficient to point out that of the 33 quatrains quoted in the anthology of 1330 (of which two are repeated, so that the true total is 31), 8 only are given in C, and 7 in CB; of the 13 contained in the anthology of 1340, 11 are in C, 9 in CB; of the 158 in the Bodleian manuscript, 60 are in C, only 42 in CB; of Christensen's selection of 121 "genuine" stanzas, 67 are present in C, only 48 in CB; of Furughi's choice of 178, 89 are in C and 69 in CB.

Turning from transcription and edition to early quotation, the following facts are noteworthy. In the *Sindbadh-nāma* of Mohammed Samarqandī, composed in 556 (1161), five quatrains of Omar Khayyám are cited, anonymously as with all the poetry in that book; of these, three occur in C and CB. Najm al-Dīn Dāya, the author of the *Mirsād al-'ibād* which was written in 620 (1223), quotes two quatrains of Omar; both are given in C, one only in CB. The famous history of Juvainī cites Omar once; this quatrain appears in C and CB. Hamd Allāh Mustaufī in his *Tārīkh-i guzīda*, completed in 730 (1330), also quotes Omar once; the quatrain occurs in neither manuscript. Professor Sa'id Nafisi discovered in Persia a commonplace book written *circa* 750 (1349), in which 11 quatrains ascribed to Omar are given; of these 6 are in C, 4 in CB. His Excellency Dr. Qasim Ghani found in the National Library at Teheran an anthology of Persian poetry, apparently composed during the fourteenth century, which quotes Omar five times; two of these quatrains appear in C and CB.

After this recital of bleak but solid facts, an accumulation

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of evidence—no doubt yet to be expanded as old texts and manuscripts come to be further studied—which all tends to strengthen the claims of C and CB to be considered reasonably authoritative, we turn with much hesitation to the far more difficult problems of the hiatus in transmission, and the decline in Omar's reputation. The first observation that needs to be made here is that, in view of the very incomplete information yet available about the contents of the manuscript collections in Turkey and Persia, it may well be that other Omar codices of the thirteenth century, and perhaps even earlier, still remain to be discovered; so that we cannot by any means be certain that the apparent hiatus really exists. Secondly, it is to be remembered that Persian manuscripts dating from before the Mongol invasions are comparatively rare, so great was the holocaust that accompanied those disasters; and many old copies of the *Rubáiyát* may have perished in the general conflagration, or been destroyed by deliberate vandalism or fanaticism. It is worth while recalling the fate which has befallen many once famous and popular poets of old Persia; for instance Rūdakī, who died in 329 (940-1), and was accounted the first great Persian poet, is said by some to have composed more than a million verses, yet of these a mere handful have survived. In the face of these and similar facts—for many like instances could be mentioned—it becomes almost surprising that Omar has come down to us at all, other than in sporadic quotation, and the discovery of these two fine thirteenth-century manuscripts stands out by contrast as most exceptional.

Experts have speculated that the *Rubáiyát* have reached us by several distinct lines of transmission. C and CB are now seen to belong to one and the same family, and further analysis may establish them to have had numerous progeny. Evidence at present available suggests however that they enjoyed a very limited circulation; they were certainly never in any public collection; perhaps they remained jealously guarded treasures



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of individual households for many generations, as has often happened with oriental manuscripts. The compiler of C writes in his final colophon as though he acted not only as transcriber but also in a sense as editor; he says that he carried through his labour "on the spur of the moment" and "in a great hurry", and gives these circumstances as palliation for any errors he may have committed. If the question is asked, what sources did he draw upon in making his selection, it is obvious that the point cannot be answered except speculatively. One might suppose that he had at his disposal a splendid old manuscript of the twelfth century, possibly the *recensio recepta* desired by Professor Minorsky, containing as many as 750 quatrains. It might equally well be conjectured that he had a number of commonplace books before him, each comprising a smaller or greater collection, from which he chose what pleased him as he went along; though against this hazard is to be set the fact that he never quotes the same poem twice, which being in a hurry he might well have done. There is the third possibility that he was transmitting from memory; educated Persians of his time, and indeed of all times, carried in their minds quite incredible quantities of poetry. On the whole, however, the most plausible theory is that he had a single manuscript in his hands. If so, we have to debate whether Omar himself ever issued a definitive edition of his poems, or whether the quatrains came into general circulation in another fashion. This is a point to which we shall return a little later, when we come to discuss the nature of the quatrain as an art-form, and the characteristics of Omar's style.

If a hiatus in the transmission did in fact occur after C and CB were compiled, this would seem inevitably to be bound up with the equally problematical decline in Omar's reputation; other factors are also no doubt involved. Furughi in any case would not have it that Omar's fame was ever slight in Persia, and protested vigorously against the fashion of saying that only FitzGerald's translation rescued him from complete obscurity.



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This is surely as much an exaggeration one way, as was the view he opposed in the other. Beyond all reasonable doubt a decline did take place; and it is quite easy to invent plausible explanations. The giants of Persian literature, with a few notable exceptions such as Firdausī and Anvarī, belong to the thirteenth and two succeeding centuries; with the magnificent poetry of 'Attār, Rūmī, Sa'dī, Hāfiz and Jāmī (to mention only the chiefest) to transcribe, copyists and their employers would have comparatively little use for the much slighter Omar. Moreover a great change in literary taste had taken place in the years of the Mongol invasions; but this is a matter examination of which, within the limits set by this essay, we must also postpone in order to take it in our stride when we are looking at Omar's philosophy of life. Later it became possible for Omar's message to be accepted either for what it really was, or as a mystical allegory; and so his reputation was once more enhanced, and copyists looking for little tasks of calligraphy to please less wealthy patrons did not mind turning to the *Rubáiyāt* now and again.

At this point it will be convenient to halt for the time being these more recondite arguments, of interest rather to scholars of Persian literature than to the general reader, and to come back once more to FitzGerald and his celebrated paraphrase. His method has been described and discussed frequently in the past; it will be recalled that E. Heron-Allen, a great enthusiast who made a most painstaking analysis of the *Rubáiyāt*, showed that 49 of the stanzas are more or less faithful renderings of single quatrains, or parts of them; 44 are contaminations of more than one quatrain; several belong to other poets; and 3 cannot be traced to any known original. It is fairly common knowledge that the arrangement of the quatrains to form a single work of art was FitzGerald's own invention, each stanza being in the Persian an isolated composition. It is also widely realized that some of the most famous stanzas in FitzGerald's

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sequence are rather free adaptations of what Omar wrote. In my edition of Mr. Chester Beatty's manuscript I went to the trouble of giving a very close and unemotional translation of the Persian, so as to illustrate this point for those interested to know the plain facts; and was somewhat brusquely taken to task by an eminent literary reviewer for my pains. Nevertheless I do not propose to be discouraged by so curious a misunderstanding of an elementary duty of scholarship, and boldly repeat the offence here, in greater detail within a much more limited compass.

Let us make a beginning with the stanza chosen by FitzGerald, with great artistry, to open his poem. In the first edition it appears in the following form:

Awake! for Morning in the Bowl of Night  
Has flung the Stone that puts the Stars to Flight;  
And lo! the Hunter of the East has caught  
The Sultán's Turret in a Noose of Light.

FitzGerald worked over this quatrain with very great care. The second edition read:

Wake! For the Sun behind yon Eastern height  
Has chased the Session of the Stars from Night;  
And, to the field of Heav'n ascending, strikes  
The Sultán's Turret with a Shaft of Light.

The first draft of the third edition modified the opening couplet to:

Wake! For the Sun before him into Night  
A Signal flung that put the Stars to flight.

Finally came the revision which satisfied the fastidious craftsman:

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Wake! For the Sun, who scatter'd into flight  
The Stars before him from the Field of Night,  
Drives Night along with them from Heav'n, and  
strikes  
The Sultán's Turret with a Shaft of Light.

Now for Omar himself; he wrote:

khurshīdh° kamand-i subh° bar bām afgand  
kaikhusrav-i rūz° muhra dar jām afgand  
mai khur ki nidā-yi 'ishq° hangām-i sahar  
āvāza-yi ishrabū dar aiyām afgand.

The literal meaning of these lines is as follows:

The sun the noose of morning upon the roof has cast,  
the emperor of day the pebble into the cup has cast;  
drink wine, for the proclamation of Love at the time of  
dawn  
the cry "Drink ye!" among the days has cast.

But this stark translation requires to be amplified by an analysis of the images in Omar's mind, in order that the full implication of the poem may be realized. He pictures the rising sun as a royal huntsman about to lead the chase into the field. The huntsman, already in the saddle visibly, in high spirits casts his lasso and catches the roof-top in its spinning noose; the scene is well-observed—the roof-top is now the broad expanse of the skies, suddenly lit up by the radiance of a Persian sunrise. In his other hand the huntsman holds the bowl into which he has already cast the pebble which is the conventional signal for departure; but this second image merges brilliantly into a third; the bowl of which the poet speaks, heaven's bowl, leads naturally to the recollection of the more customary use of a bowl; the pebble is seen to be red

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(the rising sun itself), and glows red in the Eastern sky like wine in a glass. Dawn is thus the signal for beginning another day of drinking; the poet therefore commands his friend, the beloved saki, to drink; for the thought of wine automatically evokes the recollection of love. The last image of the poem is a characteristic touch of blasphemy. Omar is reminded of the mystical legend, that in the beginning Divine Love, the saki of God the Lover, poured wine for God the Beloved on forty successive mornings, and so created the world—as a later poet, 'Irāqī, put the matter:

From the founts  
Of power creative the Artificer  
Brought forth the several species true to type,  
And after forty days in perfect form  
Produced them visible: on forty dawns  
The cup was passed, whereof each spirit drew  
Life-giving draughts.

Since God on that remote occasion commanded the things to be created to drink of the wine of His creative power, so, according to Omar's bacchanalian logic, the Divine Order is still to be obeyed. He uses the hieratic Arabic *ishrabū* to emphasize the sublime origin of the behest; and in doing so, echoes those passages in the Koran where men are bidden to "eat and *drink* the good things wherewith they have been provided." And having resolved to employ this Arabic word in the last line of his poem, he prepares for it with consummate artistry by using the Arabic terms for morning (line 1), proclamation (line 3) and dawn (line 3). (Incidentally, it is to be observed that the outrageous wit of the concluding couplet only appears in its full brilliance in C and CB; later manuscripts in which the poem is found expurgate the phrasing so as to omit the reference to Divine Love being the original saki, so destroying the entire beauty of the image.)

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When we return from Omar's apparently simple but in fact very subtle diction to FitzGerald's extremely polished paraphrase, we see that the latter entirely omits the second half of the original stanza, while he progressively changes the imagery of the first half until the scene evoked by Omar is altered almost beyond recognition. FitzGerald eventually evolved a very satisfying quatrain, but it is a pale reflection indeed of the glittering splendour of Omar's lines. Our analysis of the Persian poet's images by no means exhausts the examination; we must note his verbal felicities, and easy, effortless use of the rhetorical figures required in his time for elegant composition. There is a beautiful balance between *khurshīdh* (the sun) and *kaikhusrav-i rūz* (the emperor of day); there is much charm in the successive references to morn and day (*subh*, *rūz*, *sahar*, *aiyām*); the Arabic *ñidā* (proclamation) is delicately coupled with the Persian *āvāza* (cry); the repetition thrice of the verb *afgand* (cast), each time in a slightly different idiom, is masterly; the alliteration is restrained but most effective. When the quatrain is studied to this degree of detail, it becomes obvious that no translator, however skilful and of whatever language, could hope to catch more than a few flashes and echoes of this masterpiece of miniature writing, a veritable jewel of the poetic art.

Now let us look at what is perhaps FitzGerald's best-known stanza

Here with a Loaf of Bread beneath the Bough,  
A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse—and Thou  
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—  
And Wilderness is Paradise enow.

That is how it first appeared. The second edition substituted "a little Bread" for "a Loaf of Bread", but the translator repented of this, and finally satisfied himself with:

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A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,  
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou  
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—  
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow.

Omar wrote :

gar dast° dihadh zi maghz-i gandum nānī  
v-az mai du manī zi gūs°pandī rānī  
bā dilbarakī nishasta dar vīrānī  
'aishī st° ki nīst° hadd-i har sultānī.

The literal translation of this is :

If hand should give (i.e. if there should be at hand)  
of the pith of wheat a loaf,  
and of wine a two-maunder (jug), of a sheep a thigh,  
with a little sweetheart seated in a desolation,  
a pleasure it is that is not the attainment of any sultan.

The poem is much simpler than the preceding, but has its own particular elegances. To begin with, Omar sets out to use commonplace, rustic images—a characteristic of the quatrain in its original form to which we shall refer in a subsequent context. Nevertheless he is a fastidious “bucolic”: his loaf must be baked of the finest wheaten flower, he will not be satisfied with the crude barley-meal of the true peasant. He asks for the thigh of a sheep, for his meat is to be succulent and tender. His companion is to be a pretty young boy (boy rather than girl for Persian poetic taste); the diminutive is used, to prevent us from imagining a strapping country bumpkin. And in order to bring home the artificiality of the situation created in the first three lines, all in pure Persian, in his concluding verse he introduces no fewer than three Arabic words, thus giving a very urbane finish to the poem. We are to observe the

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mention of several parts of the body; in line 1, *dast* (hand, used idiomatically) and *maghz* (brain, but here by metaphor pith); in line 2, *rānī* (thigh); in line 3, the suggestion of *dil* (heart) in *dilbarakī* (sweetheart); and there are some obscene echoes in certain other words. The image of desolation (*vīrānī*) is required in order to balance with the picture of splendid palaces conjured up by the mention of *sultānī*, palaces themselves destined, in Omar's philosophy of life, some day sooner rather than later to become desolations. The word '*aish*' (pleasure, originally life) is employed in line 4 because its colloquial use for wheat or bread balances with *nānī* in line 1. The term *hadd* (attainment, literally boundary) reminds us that *kingdoms* are limited by their confines, whereas the care-free lover's life which the poet seeks, in the desolation of no-man's-land, is boundless.

Now going back to FitzGerald, it is to be remarked that Omar says nothing about a Book of Verses underneath the Bough, though a later copyist credits him with having done so. And indeed the idea would never have occurred to him; first because an educated Persian of his time would scarcely dream of taking a manuscript with him on a picnic in the desert, having by heart enough poetry to suffice him for many picnics, and secondly for the simple reason that in a Persian wilderness there are not apt to be any trees, and in any case the mention of green shady boughs will chime ill with the austere note struck by the reference to deserted ruins. Nevertheless this was FitzGerald's compensation for omitting the third item in Omar's pannier, the thigh of mutton, which naturally appeared to the English poet as a most unromantic object, totally alien to his Victorian theory of literary proprieties; and it is hard to condemn his fastidiousness, when one considers how faithful Whinfield, the painstaking but pedestrian scholarly versifier, rendered the phrase as "mutton chine" for no other ostensible reason than that he needed a rhyme for wine. As things turned out, ironically enough the Book of Verses, promoted

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by FitzGerald, as between his first and his final version, from third to first place in the catalogue of amenities, appealed to his public as the most elegant and poetical item of all; and many a pale Victorian young lady or gentleman, when packing the luncheon-basket for the excursion to the woods, must have remembered with religious fidelity to include a prettily-bound copy of the *Rubáiyát*.

Here is one of FitzGerald's most suggestive stanzas:

And lately, by the Tavern Door agape,  
Came stealing through the Dusk an Angel Shape  
Bearing a Vessel on his Shoulder; and  
He bid me taste of it; and 'twas—the Grape!

The first version almost contented him; the only change he made in the final draft was to heighten the mystery by substituting “shining” for “stealing”. But what does Omar actually say?

sarmast° ba-maikhāna guzar kardam dūsh  
pīrī dīdham mast u sabū'ī bar dūsh  
guftam ki chirā nadāri az yazdān sharm  
guftā ki karīmast° khudhā bādha ba-nūsh.

And this means literally:

Drunken by the wine-house I passed yesternight;  
an old man I saw, drunk, and a pitcher on (his) shoulder;  
I said, “Why hast thou not before God shame?”  
He said, “Generous is God: drink wine!”

There is nothing in the original about an Angel Shape, and the whole ghostly atmosphere of FitzGerald's version is completely at variance with the dissolute scene as pictured by Omar. The beauty of the Persian poem is of a different kind, but no less striking; while the stanza ends with a typical touch



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of sacrilegious humour wholly lacking in FitzGerald. It is a familiar scene. The young tippler encounters the old reprobate coming drunk out of the tavern, and affects to be shocked by the contrast between the reverend mien of the elder (the word *pīr* connotes piety as well as age) and the flagrant evidence of his addiction to the unlawful pleasure of drinking. Normally, in the poetry of the moralists, it would be the pious elder who would ask the young debauchee whether he was not ashamed to be seen by God in his sins; Omar reverses the roles, and so gives the old rascal the opportunity of drawing upon his sententious wisdom to say first of all that Allah is Gracious—a blameless observation very proper upon the lips of a tottering old man, no doubt in rags and looking to God for sustenance, and whatever he may be able to collect from the charity of the hale and hearty. But Allah's Grace consists first in His promise to pardon the sins of those who believe in Him, and secondly in creating wine; and it is the delight of drinking this that the elder urges his young disciple to gratify.

So one by one FitzGerald's stanzas could be examined against a dissection of the literal meaning and inward spirit of Omar's originals. But to make anything approaching even a representative analysis of this sort would call for a great number of pages, and it must suffice for the present merely to indicate the lines on which an extended inquiry could be conducted. Enough has been given here to show, what was already widely accepted, that FitzGerald is often very far indeed from the actual wording of Omar, to an extent that would be condemned as impermissible in any version of a European poet; but FitzGerald had been excused, apart from the greatness of his poetical achievement, perhaps because Europe has adopted a somewhat colonial attitude to oriental writing, perhaps also because it was fashionably supposed that Persian images were apt to be so alien to Western taste as to be beyond accurate reflection. But while the English poet has been forgiven his

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infidelity to the letter, he has generally been defended as being most admirably faithful to the spirit of his Persian model. Thus Christensen, who made the most meticulous examination of Omar's themes and the "philosophy" of his poetry, summed up the results of his research in the following words: "The portrait of the poet 'Umar-i-Khayyám which outlines itself from this selection does not, indeed, differ very much from the one familiar to us through the version of FitzGerald. We see that FitzGerald, for all the liberties he has taken with the original, has grasped with a sure psychological and esthetical instinct the true kernel of the 'Umarian poetry.'" It remains to consider whether this verdict is still justified, now that the discovery of the Cambridge and Chester Beatty manuscripts has given us a so much clearer picture of what Omar really wrote.

First it is necessary, quite briefly, to get rid of the misapprehension, against which FitzGerald himself rightly protested in the preface to the second edition of his *Rubáiyát*, that Omar was a mystical poet, and that all his references to wine and drunkenness must be interpreted allegorically. The theory was put out by Nicolas, Omar's French editor, and has been held by a number of the poet's less discriminating admirers; and indeed there is some substance for their error, seeing that the libertine imagery had already been freely used by Persian mystics, and had hardened into a traditional vocabulary employed ever since in lyrical poetry.

Moreover the mistake is of very long standing, for we read in the *History of the Philosophers* of Qiftī, who died in 646 (1248), that "the Sufis (Moslem mystics) came upon some of his entirely exoteric poetry and converted it to their peculiar fashion, quoting it in their religious circles"; and in fact we have confirmatory evidence of this, since some of Omar's quatrains are included in the ancient manuscripts of the *Rubáiyát* of Rūmī, the greatest of Persian mystics who died in 672 (1273). But this fancy cannot stand up to criticism; even

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the most superficial perusal of Omar's poems makes it abundantly clear that he was no friend of the Sufis, whom he both parodies and directly attacks in a number of places.

It is a cardinal error to read Omar in isolation, and to imagine that one can understand and appreciate his poetry without reference to all that had happened in Persian literature and Islamic philosophy before him. There is no valid reason to suppose that he invented a single one of the many images he uses, or that he was in the slightest degree original in his outlook on the world. Artificiality and convention are such predominant features of Persian (and, for that matter, Arabic and Turkish) poetry, that it is safest to assume, for want of positive evidence to the contrary, in studying any of these classical poets that they were merely refining and selecting out of a well-seasoned and almost static repertory accumulated through many preceding generations. Unfortunately we do not yet possess, what would be of the utmost value to criticism, a historical dictionary of images in Islamic poetry; but we do know enough to be quite certain in the case of Omar that he had already many predecessors in what he tried to say, and even to some extent in the manner of his saying it. Our task of appreciation is to consider his poems in the light of these facts, and to evaluate his individual genius accordingly.

Omar is above all other things a poet of rationalist pessimism; but unlike the majority of pessimists he never takes himself or his views too tragically, and therefore his style is lightened and enlivened by a very delicate sense of humour. He was certainly by no means the first rationalist in Islam; indeed he was very nearly the last in a long and distinguished succession. It would take us very far afield indeed to enter upon even a cursory sketch of the history of free-thought in the religion of Mohammed, and it will have to do in this context to refer briefly to some salient examples. Rationalism was a battle fought, sometimes openly and sometimes under cover, against the domination of orthodoxy and Arab rule by those

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various elements in the Empire who, having read the Greek philosophers, desired either out of honest conviction or for political motives to challenge the authority of authority, or at least to make smug self-satisfaction feel uncomfortable. Persian intellectuals in particular resented the subjugation of their once proud and powerful country, and while they had no special affection for Zoroastrian beliefs and ways they were not averse to reminding their Arab overlords that Islam was a foreign and a not very clever creed: wine, which was allowed by Zoroaster but prohibited by Mohammed, provided an admirable symbol of rebellion, the more especially because it maketh glad the heart of man. The Persians quite early in the history of Islam taught the Arab rulers how to drink, and found them apt enough pupils; the caliph Yazīd, who died in 64 (683), is reported to have been a confirmed drunkard, and is named by some as the author of those famous lines:

Ho, saki, haste, the beaker bring,  
Fill up, and pass it round the ring

which Hāfiz later quoted in the most celebrated of his lyrics. Abū Nuwās, Hārūn al-Rashīd's favourite poet and the unchallenged laureate of Arabic bacchanalia, had a Persian mother; many of the drinking-images which are so much enjoyed by Omar enthusiasts were used by that stout Arab libertine; he has for instance one short poem which anticipates almost uncannily FitzGerald's "Book of Verses underneath the Bough":

Four things there be that Life impart  
To Soul, to Body, and to Heart:  
A running Stream, a flowered Glade,  
A Jar of Wine, a lovely Maid.

While the Epicurean delights of the flesh were flaunted to tempt Arab tyrants not ill-disposed to relax in their lavish

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palaces, the more Stoic pleasures of intellectual doubt, attractively presented in brilliant writing, tantalized and exasperated the turbaned doctors of theology whose narrow training was poor equipment to counter the barbed shafts of Persian agnosticism. Rhazes, who died in 313 (925), extolled Reason as far superior to Revelation, and conceived of God not as the dread omnipotent tyrant of overwrought orthodox imagination, but as a reasonable and accommodating Being ready to forgive even unbelief. "If any man", he writes in his *Spiritual Physick*, "should doubt the truth of that law (i.e. Islam), or is ignorant of it, or is not certain that it is real, it only behoves him to search and consider to the limit of his strength and power; for if he applies all his capacity and strength, without failing or flagging, he can scarcely fail to arrive at the right goal. And if he should fail—which is scarcely likely to happen—yet Almighty God is more apt to forgive and pardon him, seeing that He requires of no man what lies not within his capacity; rather does He charge and impose upon His servants far, far less than that." Avicenna, the greatest of Persian philosophers whose death preceded Omar's birth by less than a generation, was exceedingly addicted to wine and other carnal indulgences, and argued strongly against the orthodox doctrine of a physical resurrection; his idea of Paradise was the Neoplatonic conception of union with the First Intelligence.

But even in Avicenna's lifetime the halcyon days of liberal agnosticism were at an end. Theology had now assimilated the technique of philosophical argument, and was better able to meet unbelief face to face and with equal weapons. The triumph of Mahmūd of Ghazna, that awe-inspiring Turkish bigot, made conformity the only safe and profitable qualification for a successful career in Persia. The Nizamiya Academies, established by Nizām al-Mulk (who was killed in 1092 by an Assassin) for the promotion of sound religious learning, now became the intellectual centres of Eastern Islam. In Omar's own times the Chair of Theology at Baghdad was

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occupied by so redoubtable a controversialist as Ghazālī, whose complete mastery of philosophical dialectic enabled him to destroy Avicenna's influence and virtually to put an end to free speculation in Islam.

Little as we know of the authentic details of Omar's life—the very year of his birth is not recorded—it is safe to assume that he was born at Nishapur the son of a tent-maker; one would suppose, not in a big way, but a fairly humble tradesman; that he studied there philosophy, mathematics and astronomy; and that he was already a scientist of repute when in 467 (1074-5) he was invited by the Seljuk ruler Malikshāh to his newly-established observatory in order to help reform the calendar. All our extant authorities agree that he attained great fame in his lifetime as an astronomer and a mathematician, and that he enjoyed the favour of powerful princes; one anecdote also credits him with competence in medicine, relating that he cured Sultan Sanjar of smallpox when he was a boy. We may presume that he lectured on the subjects in which he was expert; indeed we are told the names of some of his pupils, and that he was a harsh master; we are also informed of his intercourse with eminent contemporaries, such as Nizāmī the Prosodist, the learned Kakoyid prince Farāmarz, and the celebrated Ghazālī himself. Qiftī and other biographers tell how he was accused of irreligion, and thereafter reined his tongue and performed the pilgrimage to Mecca as a token of his faith; that when he came to Baghdad "the people of his path in the ancient science" (i.e. the students of Greek philosophy) sought him out, but he closed his door against them, as if a true penitent. Baihaqī has him die in the odour of sanctity, quoting as his last words the prayer, "O God, Thou art aware that I have known Thee to the full extent of my possibilities; forgive me, for my knowledge of Thee is my means of coming to Thee."

How much of this is sober fact, and how much is romantic

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legend, it is hazardous in the extreme to determine; for Arab and Persian biographers are not generally over-scrupulous in their attention to the truth, and will tell a story if it is interesting and weigh its value by that criterion alone. But surely if Omar was as great a scientist and philosopher as he is made out to be, he wrote singularly little to be a record of his thoughts in the realm of speculation; though of mathematics enough for him to be appraised by those competent to judge as really eminent. It may be that he was one of those scholars who are disinclined to write much, and establish their reputation by the excellence of their teaching and their practical work; on the other hand it is possible that he feared to commit to paper his original findings in metaphysics, though he was famed as a follower of Avicenna, because he judged the times were not propitious for broadcasting opinions contrary to strict orthodoxy. In the latter event he would have satisfied himself with expressing his dangerous doubts in the only medium open to him, occasional Persian verses recited to amuse an intimate circle of faithful friends and disciples; and some evidence in confirmation of this supposition may perhaps be found in No. 206 of the collection here translated:

The secrets of the world, as we  
Succinctly on our tablets write,  
Are not expedient to recite:  
A plague to heart and head they be.

Since there is none, as I can find,  
Of those brave wizards of to-day  
Worthy to hear, I cannot say  
The wondrous thoughts I have in mind.

It was only when the purport of these exercises of wit became known to a wider public—by the whispering of his poems abroad and the amusement and delight with which they were

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greeted by his growing public—it was only then that he found himself confronted by the dread charge of infidelity, and took refuge in dissimulation to save his skin.

This is all guesswork; but that it is plausible guesswork will be more apparent when we consider the history of the poetic form in which he expressed his little blasphemies. I have gone into the matter at some length in the preface to my translation of the *Rubáiyát* of Rūmī, and do not propose to repeat here what I have sketched out there, but only to mention the most important and most relevant facts.

The *rubái* (which is the singular of *Rubáiyát*) is the only purely Persian invention in the science of prosody, all other Persian poetry being written in Arabic metres and forms. It is said that the characteristic rhythm was discovered by a very early Persian poet of the ninth or tenth century who heard a boy shout at his play a phrase which, as they say, went with a swing; he matched the phrase with three others on the same metrical pattern, and so created the *rubái* or foursome. Soon others began to compose in this fashion, and the vogue spread throughout Persia. “Noble and commoner”, writes a later prosodist, “alike were entranced by this form, scholar and illiterate equally enamoured of this poetry; ascetic and reprobate each had a share in it, pious and wicked each had an affection for it; men of crooked temperament, who could not make out verse from prose, and had no knowledge of metre and stress, found an excuse in the song for dancing; men whose hearts were dead, so that they could not distinguish between the melody of the pipes and the braying of a donkey, and were removed a thousand leagues from the delights of the lute’s strain, were ready to yield up their souls for a quatrain.”

The test of excellence in a *rubái* was its spontaneity and appositeness; being of plebeian origin, it long retained a certain rustic flavour. It was a common exercise for a skilled poet to compose a *rubái* on the spur of the moment, in order to



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commemorate a passing incident or express a random idea. The poem, being very brief, was easily remembered and passed from mouth to mouth almost with wireless rapidity. Being a Persian invention, it was naturally much prized; and the uses to which it was put were varied and numerous. Technically seen, the *rubái* consists of two verses; for Islamic prosody reckons what we call a couplet to be a single unit; and this fact explains the AABA pattern of its rhyme (though AAAA is permissible, and is not infrequently found in Omar's poems); for the opening verse of a Persian or Arabic or Turkish or Urdu composition contains a rhyming pair of halves, and the same rhyme is generally used throughout the poem. Moreover it is a part of the classical theory of Islamic poetry that each verse should be independent in itself, and not require assistance from any previous or subsequent verse to complete its meaning. Therefore the *rubái* should, and in most instances does, contain two distinct or distinguishable elements; it runs from its beginning up, and falls gently down to its close; and the squib or sting, the surprise or supreme touch of beauty, comes in the second half of the second verse—the fourth line of the FitzGerald quatrain. It will be apparent from this brief description that the *rubái* has all the makings of a perfect epigrammatic form; and so in fact it is. Finally, it may be usefully repeated that each half-line of the *rubái* is made up of up to thirteen syllables, as against the ten syllables of FitzGerald's imitation; and the rhythm of the *rubái* is extremely variable.

Many poets had written many *rubáiyát* before Omar invented a solitary one; most of their compositions have unfortunately perished, but enough survive for us to know that the form had already been fully matured and perhaps even become rigidly fixed and conventionalized by the middle of the twelfth century. The two principal themes of the *rubái*-writer were love and piety; as piety was commonly expressed in the idiom of the human passions, these two classes are not always easily separated. Omar certainly knew all this poetry,

and much besides alike in Persian and Arabic; it is revealing to find him in one anecdote quoting a verse of the celebrated Arab free-thinker Abu 'l-'Alā al-Ma'arrī. Knowing this poetry and its conventions, he set himself the congenial task of parodying it and using its repertory of images in fresh and amusing ways. This indeed is the most marked and least recognised feature of his verse: its sheer brilliance and sense of fun. It is a feature which will come as a surprise to those who depend for their conception of Omar's inner meaning upon FitzGerald's paraphrase—though the English poet to be sure discerned Omar as “flinging his own genius and learning with a bitter or humorous jest into the general ruin which their insufficient glimpses only served to reveal.” The humour is there, certainly; the bitterness, unless I am wholly mistaken in my estimate of the man, exceedingly rarely.

I have occasionally noticed when examining old Arabic manuscripts, that it was the custom of some possessing works on philosophy, after finishing their study of the text, to add on the end fly-leaves a few Persian *rubáiyât*; and it has occurred to me to wonder whether Persian professors of philosophy may not have been in the habit of rewarding their diligent students at the conclusion of a weary course of lectures by quoting to them a few quatrains as a sort of academic liqueur much in the way that our own eminent professors are apt to throw in a jest or two to keep their classes in good humour. If this theory is sound, it may provide a clue to the circumstances under which Omar composed and broadcast some of his poems; others were invented on other occasions, such as the drinking-bout and the Nauruz (New Year's Day) party. It is fairly easy to pick out the academic jokes in the Cambridge manuscript of the *Rubáiyât*; but it will do no great harm to draw attention to some of them here. Thus, it was obviously after a lecture on logic that Omar recited No. 9 of this collection, with its glittering and extremely witty array of technical terms:

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And if the saki knows aright.  
My Genus, and its Property,  
And of each Species instantly  
A hundred Cases can recite :

He shall continue at his will  
His Custom, when I can no more,  
And with each glass that he shall pour  
Enlarge my Definition still.

A discourse on metaphysics may well have inspired No. 22 :

Thou who art wholly unaware  
How the world's order is designed,  
Since thy foundations are the Wind  
Thy structure is no more than Air.

Thy being is a boundary  
That runs betwixt twain nothingness :  
About thee all is substanceless,  
Thyself, therein, Nonentity.

His "divorce of barren Reason" (No. 63) is a good  
mathematical jest :

Now with a glass one measure high  
Grief I will slay, old foe of mine,  
And, having quaffed two pints of wine,  
Count no man half as rich as I.

First, in divorce thrice over cried,  
Reason and Faith I'll put away,  
Then take, to crown my happy day,  
The daughter of the grape for bride.

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Physics and the theory of the Four Elements put No. 76 into his mind :

Clean from Nonentity we came  
And all unclean we did depart,  
Entered with gladness in our heart  
And left in sorrow and in shame.

The Water weeping from our eyes  
Betrayed the Fire within our breast;  
Our life's to Air, and for the rest  
In the dark Earth our body lies.

A discussion of cosmogony, and an exposition of the rival theories that there are seven or eight "layers" of heaven, may well have been the occasion for No. 218 to be composed :

Since never turned the Wheel of Fate  
To suit the wishes of the wise,  
As thou desirest, count the skies  
At seven, or to tot up eight.

Since joy is small, and life is scant,  
And all desires in death must end,  
What care, if wolf in desert rend  
Thy flesh, or gnaw, in grave, the ant?

And so forth; the instances can be multiplied, as the ingenious reader will delight to discover. And indeed the clue, once grasped, will be found to lead to further interesting disclosures; it becomes a pretty exercise of ingenuity to try to assign each quatrain to a particular incident or situation in Omar's life. Is it not attractive to suppose, for instance, that he invented No. 238 when it was reported to him that the theologians were accusing him of infidelity?

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With those brave stupids, two or three,  
Who in their folly are so wise  
They know, what we scarce realize,  
They only know the world, not we:

Thou 'st better be an ass as well;  
For they 're so sunk in assishness  
That they call every man, unless  
He be an ass, an infidel.

But this is a game that more than one can play; and I will not be so inconsiderate as to rob my readers, if they so choose, of all the fun.

It is time to look again at Omar's famous agnosticism, and to take in that connexion the handful of "pious" quatrains which have been such a sore vexation to some critics. Stripped of its poetic ornament, Omar's philosophy of doubt can be reduced to a few very simple paradoxes:

- (1) If God created the world and finds evil in it, whose fault is that but God's?
- (2) If God is All-merciful, why should He threaten to punish any sin?
- (3) If Wine is an unlawful pleasure, why did God create it?
- (4) Why does God create beautiful things, and then destroy them to no apparent purpose?

These and the rest are, of course, very ancient dilemmas, and Omar was not the first man, and not the first Moslem, to formulate them; indeed they had been hotly discussed by theologians, not to mention free-thinkers, for centuries. And the solution reached by orthodoxy was not so very different in reality from that which the agnostics proposed. The theologians concluded that the nature and ways of God were incomprehensible, but added the rider that His Will must be

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obeyed, as revealed through the mouth of His Holy Prophet; while the philosophers agreed wholeheartedly with the first thesis of their opponents (though they would vary it to say that Fate, or Chance, had best be accepted with a good grace, which is not quite the same thing as surrendering to Allah), they were inclined to demur, when bold enough, to the second dogma. Not many were so courageous, or purblind, as to go the whole way of doubt, and to aver with Omar:

The world's affairs, as so they seem,  
Nay, the whole universe complete  
Is a delusion and a cheat,  
A fantasy, an idle dream.

Yet Abu 'l-'Alā al-Ma'arri, who lived a century before Omar, was even more forthright in his unbelief, as when he wrote (and R. A. Nicholson translated):

We laugh, but inept is our laughter,  
We should weep, and weep sore,  
Who are shattered like glass and thereafter  
Remoulded no more.

Omar at least comforted himself with the poet's fancy that his dust *would* be remoulded—he hoped, into a wine-jar:

When I shall stand abashed and bowed  
And only hope remains to me,  
When the hard hand of Destiny  
Has plucked me of my feathers proud

I charge you not to make my clay  
Except into a rounded bowl;  
Perchance I shall regain my soul  
When the wine's fragrance wafts my way.

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What a world of difference between the tragic unbelief of the Syrian, and the humorous insouciance of the Persian poet!

True, there are some quatrains in which Omar appears to plumb the depths of human despair; clowns are commonly credited with broken hearts, and every scholar knows the misery of depression. True, there are some in which he seems to repent of his infidelity and to wish to believe again. Critics who have stumbled upon these latter poems, and found them to be stumbling-blocks, have only their theory to blame for their troubles; as if any poet ever kept consistently to a single philosophy! They do not allow for such a situation arising in Omar's life—and it is apt to happen in the East—as for instance that he should throw off a pietistic poem or two just to show that he could do it as well as the best; and indeed he was certainly able to write on that theme as skilfully as the professional penitents. That is one explanation which will cover the facts; we should not however lose sight of the possibility that Omar really did have moods in which he was a sincere believer, and that perhaps his biographers are telling the truth when they say that after a certain age he put away childish things. But these few religious-minded verses are not characteristic of the poet: his outstanding qualities are gaiety, indifference, humour, and a wonderful gift of parody. Thus, it was the fashion among Persian poets to describe their emotions in highly exaggerated terms; if they burned with love, their fiery sighs would set the world alight; if they wept for woe, their tears, always crimson with their heart's blood, would flow in a mighty undammable torrent. Sanā'ī, Omar's contemporary, described the passionate heart thus:

A glance of tender sweetness,  
A smile, and love is born;  
Love's end? A soul tormented,  
Sore weeping, and forlorn.

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A heart in flames consuming,  
A bitter flood of tears—  
It is well known to lovers  
How love o'erwhelms and sears.

Bābā Tāhir the wild mystic had an equally mournful story to tell:

The fateful wheel of Heaven  
Turns ever to my woe;  
Mine eyes are sore with weeping,  
My sighs to Heaven go,  
My tears in Ocean flow.

And so Omar goes even farther, and invents a truly comic image to ridicule the fashion:

A hundred dwellings by the surge  
Of my sad heart are drowned in gore,  
And there is fear ten thousand more  
My bitter weeping may submerge.

My every lash is a lock-gate  
That lets its separate runnel through,  
And if I strike my lashes to  
The flood will burst, and inundate.

Equally amusing is his parody of the far-fetched conceits with which the romantics sought to illustrate their extravagant feelings:

None in this world may stretch his hand  
To cull the rose-cheeks of the fair,  
But that the briar of despair  
Sticks in his heart its stinging brand.



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Regard the comb, that may not hold  
Within its grasp the darling's tress,  
Except in utter ruthlessness  
It has been cleft a hundredfold.

In another poem he begins in the style of the despairing mystic who complains to God of all the anguish he has suffered at His beloved hands; but whereas the mystic would end with a note of resignation (as in Rūmī's beautiful poem:

He set the world aflame,  
And laid me on the same;  
A hundred tongues of fire  
Lapped round my pyre.

And when the blazing tide  
Engulfed me, and I sighed,  
Upon my mouth in haste  
His hand He placed.)

Omar for his part varies the formula with an impudent blasphemy:

Lo, Thou hast shattered my adored  
And precious cup, and spilled my wine;  
Against my face the gate divine  
Of gladness Thou hast barred, O Lord.

Yea, all my rose-red wine is sunk  
Into the dust, because of Thee;  
Dust in my mouth—so let it be,  
Dear Lord, but art Thou haply drunk?

The Sufi will petition God for the means of serving Him every moment, and yet of finding his sustenance without the need of begging favours from the ungodly; Omar puts this point well and eloquently, but the sting, as usual, is in the tail of the poem:

## Omar Khayyám

Open for me a door, O Lord,  
Whence I may win my daily bread,  
Nor scrape for favours to be fed  
With remnants from the miser's board.

Preserve me, Lord, that I may so  
Be flown with wine my whole life through  
That if my head, as it may do,  
Thereafter ache, I shall not know.

With these few examples I return to the question, whether FitzGerald in fact succeeded in capturing the spirit of his original, and "grasped with a sure psychological and esthetical instinct the true kernel of the 'Umarian poetry.'" Upon this point some will always be eager to fly to his defence, and indeed there is no denying that he was "fully justified of his art, by the Persian perfume he redistilled into English verse." It is very far from my intention—and it would be gross impertinence, and would betray a singular perversity of taste to make the attempt—to belittle the greatness of a Victorian genius. All I ask leave to suggest is that he did not convey, and perhaps did not apprehend, the whole of Omar's philosophy; that his *Rubáiyát*, seen against the background of the Romantic Revival and mid-Victorian priggishness, did not mean, and does not mean, to his readers all that Omar meant to those who heard him; and that it is not after all a sacrilege, though it may well be pretentious, to wish to make another attempt at conveying Omar's whole message with greater accuracy and fidelity.

Now it is time to pick up a few loose threads, before casting off these casual observations and offering Omar in new dress to the appraisal of my readers. I do not believe that Omar ever made any definitive collection of his poems; indeed I doubt whether he committed any of them to paper.

## Introduction

He spoke them extemporaneously, as all composers of *rubáiyát* should do; they were remembered by those who heard him, and quoted by ever wider circles of admirers; and some, before they died, but probably after Omar's time, made little collections of those poems they happened to know. Perhaps before the end of the twelfth century an editor made a *recensio recepta*; perhaps this was in the hands of the copyist of the Cambridge manuscript; perhaps stray quatrains, not in the *recensio recepta*, continued to circulate orally for several generations before being included in the *corpus*. No doubt the *corpus* was swollen in succeeding centuries by false attribution; but the new evidence of C and CB proves this inflation to have been far less massive than had come to be thought. The Mongol Invasions certainly made men indisposed to look at life so light-heartedly as Omar had done; most Moslems felt an overwhelming sense of guilt, and were driven to believe in their bewilderment that God had sent those terrible disasters as a punishment for doubting His omnipotence; and as long as the calamities continued to make life little bearable, comfort was found in the mysticism of Rūmī and the sententious wisdom of Sa'dī rather than in the gay cynicism of Omar. But Persia eventually recovered some part at least of her former material prosperity; and though philosophy never came to life again after Ghazālī's death-blow, a modest hedonism and the invincible humour of the Persian genius combined to revive to some extent the cult of Omar's poetry. Yet he never fully recaptured the fame which he enjoyed during his lifetime, until FitzGerald's exquisite *Rubáiyát* was published, and Swinburne and Meredith and Rossetti brought the masterpiece tardily to the notice of a hitherto indifferent public. That accident of fortune conferred on Omar a posthumous celebrity such as he certainly never dreamed to attain.

These little poems were spoken by a professor of mathematics eight centuries ago, as I fancy in circumstances very like

## *Omar Khayyám*

those in which another scholar-poet composed his equally few and equally brilliant academic exercises in sophisticated cynicism. It is always rash to look for parallels in literature, and it is fatally easy to exaggerate chance coincidences in these matters; but the modern instance of A. E. Housman is surely too good to be neglected by any wishing to get at the heart of Omar's poetry. Both men, as it seems, were severe teachers; having had the privilege of attending Housman's lectures, I can certainly testify to their studied austerity and his entire indifference to undergraduate popularity, and having read Omar with close attention, and seen what his biographers say of him, I suppose that in the lecture-room he was very like Housman. Both men (of the Cambridge scholar I have heard much from colleagues) could be extremely good company, brilliant in conversation and spontaneous wit. When I think of the story of Housman's speech after a banquet in Trinity, how he remarked that "Wordsworth never rose from the table except sober, nor Porson save drunk", and then went on to describe himself as "a better Latinist than Wordsworth, and a better poet than Porson, betwixt and between", I am irresistibly reminded of Omar's self-portrait and his recipe for the good life:

While I am sober, joyous glee  
Is hid from sight, and not to find;  
When I am drunken, in my mind  
I mark a great deficiency.

There is a state betwixt the twain,  
Not yet besotted by the wine  
Nor sober; ah, that it were mine,  
For there's true life alone to gain.

But there is much more than this in the comparison; and those interested to pursue the analogy further are commended to look for the common felicity of language, the common

## Introduction

affectation of rusticity, the common reaction<sup>1</sup> against an entrenched orthodoxy, the common sense of instability in personal affairs, the common enjoyment of a tolerant despair; though one would add that Housman is the more sentimental, and Omar the more astringent of the two professor-poets.

Now it is only left for me to say a few words in justification of the style and prosodic form in which this new translation has been attempted. From the few examples of Fitzgerald's paraphrase quoted and analysed it will have been observed that he reproduced in his quatrains by no means the whole contents of the original poems, and often limits himself to rendering only a half—one Persian line—of Omar's *rubái*. This was indeed almost inevitable; for not only is the English *rubái* twelve syllables shorter in all than the Persian, but the extreme terseness of the model, with its rich abundance of overtone and allusion, renders it quite beyond adequate reproduction in as few words or fewer in another language. I have always felt that, as the Persian *rubái* consists of two distinct elements, blended together in a single epigram, the most hopeful way of conveying its spirit and meaning in English is to put it into two stanzas, similarly thought of as forming an epigram, but allowing for more generous treatment than the Fitzgerald quatrain. On the metrical side, the classic pentameter, with all its associations in the history of English poetry, seems to be rather too heavy to do justice to the natural lightness and informality of the Persian rhythm. In dealing with Omar's poetry, which is so full of parody and humour, the metrical scheme which Tennyson used in his gravely philosophical *In Memoriam* seemed theoretically to promise well; and in fact these versions which follow, such as they are, came out extremely naturally, and seemed to their author to approximate reasonably closely to the pattern at which he was aiming. Whether they will so appear to his unpartisan critic is, of course, an entirely different question.



# OMAR KHAYYAM

*Translated from the Cambridge Manuscript*







All they who threaded meaning's gem  
 Upon the cord philosophy  
 Spake much upon the Deity;  
 But little knowledge was in them.

Unravelling those secrets' skein,  
 None ever found its origin,  
 But having each his tale to spin  
 Each fell at last asleep again.

And these, the choicest and the best  
 Of lowly Earth's ingenious breed,  
 Mounted on speculation's steed  
 Still strive to scale Heav'n's highest crest.

But Thou, sublime upon Thy throne,  
 Beholdest with indifferent eyes  
 Their reasons, reeling like Thy skies,  
 Defeated by the great Unknown.

Those who in ancient ages came  
 And these that live in later days  
 Depart on their successive ways:  
 For all the journey is the same.

This kingdom of the Earth and Sky  
 Remains eternally for none:  
 We too must go, as they have gone,  
 And others follow by-and-by.

If unto us no rose be given,  
 We are content to gather briar;  
 Sufficient for our needs the Fire,  
 If we must lose the light of Heaven.

Be dervish cloak and cloistered cell  
 And Moslem lore to us denied,  
 We shall be richly satisfied  
 With girdle, church and Christian bell.

Thou, Lord, didst mingle of Thy skill  
 The dust and water of my clay;  
 Thy fingers spun, for my array,  
 Wool or fine linen, at Thy will.

Since Thou hast written long ago  
 Whatever good I may have sought,  
 Whatever ill through me is wrought,  
 What, Lord, remains for me to do?

He Who hath given to the fair  
 The laughing lips of merriment  
 Bestows, as pleases His intent,  
 The sighs of anguish and despair.

Then let none frown, if this brief hour  
 My portion happiness should be:  
 I will be happy, for that He  
 Made griefs a thousandfold my dower.

Ah, that at Fortune's fickle lust  
 We waste and wither to no goal,  
 That in the wide inverted bowl  
 Of Heaven we are ground to dust.

Woe and alas, that as the eye  
 This instant flickers in its lid  
 We, who were pleased in naught we did,  
 Unwilling born, unwilling die.

Though never face more radiant were,  
 No tresses lovelier than mine,  
 My cheeks the tulip's glow outshine,  
 My stature slender as the fir:

'Tis still unclear, for what sublime  
 And purposed end so cunningly  
 The Artist of Eternity  
 Arrayed me in the bower of Time.

And if the saki knows aright  
 My Genus, and its Property,  
 And of each Species instantly  
 A hundred Cases can recite

He shall continue at his will  
 His Custom, when I can no more,  
 And with each glass that he shall pour  
 Enlarge my Definition still.

None shall diminish by one whit  
 The portion wherewith thou art fed,  
 And none augment thy daily bread,  
 Since God Himself determined it.

So it behoveth not to be  
 A slave to that which is thy Lot  
 Nor, for the other that is not,  
 To lose thy soul's tranquillity.

O saki, if my heart should chance  
 To slip this while from my control,  
 Yet like an ocean is my soul  
 That swells within its own expanse.

Not so the Sufi: lack of wit  
 His narrow vessel doth o'erbrim,  
 And when one draught is given him  
 His head is quite submerged by it.

Alas, that at the last must close  
 The tender tale of boyhood's day,  
 And life's delightful fragile May  
 Lie buried in December's snows.

I cannot tell, alas, in truth  
 How ever dwelt among us men,  
 How ever fluttered from our ken  
 That sweet, elusive songbird, Youth.

Could I but lay my hands upon  
 The Tablet of our Destiny  
 I would rewrite, harmoniously  
 To my desire, the tale thereon.

Yea, I would utterly erase  
 All sorrow from the world entire,  
 And lift my head to Heav'n and higher  
 In paeans of triumphant praise.

Behold, how Heaven's wheeling sphere  
 Directs to ill its baleful Powers:  
 Of all the friends who once were ours  
 Not one remains, to give us cheer.

Wherefore, so far as in thee lies,  
 Live for thyself; look not in vain  
 For yesterday, nor seek to gain  
 To-morrow; make to-day thy prize.

As ever Spring returns anew,  
 As ever Winter flees away,  
 So leaf by leaf, and day by day  
 Our book of life is counted through.

Drink wine: imbibe not bitter grief:  
 For poison are the world's dull cares,  
 And wine, as our wise leech declares,  
 Their antidote and sure relief.

And as the instants, one by one,  
 Of thy brief history go by,  
 Let not this moment, ere we die,  
 Except in happiness be gone.

Thy life is the scant capital  
 That in this world alone thou hast,  
 And as thy sum of days is passed  
 So passes life, beyond recall.

Consider, how yon potters lay  
 Rough hands upon the fragile earth;  
 If they had sense and reason, worth  
 The craft wherewith they shape their clay,

Never would they so punch and pound  
 And kick the stuff that is their skill,  
 Their fathers' dust, deserving still  
 Their love and reverence profound.

"It is not lawful", purists say,  
 "In Shaaban to be drinking wine;  
 And Rajab is a month divine—  
 No toping then!" So argue they.

God and His Prophet, I agree,  
 Rajab and Shaaban rightly own:  
 I drink in Ramadán alone,  
 And dedicate that month to me.

What hath befallen Heaven's wheel  
 That ever on the base bestows  
 Great mills of gain, cool porticoes,  
 Warm pools their weariness to heal?

The noble, thanks to those same skies,  
 Must pledge their all, to get them bread  
 Before they mount their narrow bed:  
 Such justice justly I despise.

Surrender not thy flesh to woe  
 For the injustice of Man's fate,  
 Nor yield thy soul inconsolate  
 To grieve for friends lost long ago.

Give not the precious heart of thine  
 Save to the loved one's locks, to bind:  
 Scatter not life upon the wind,  
 Nor live one moment without wine.

Of those to-day that living are  
 Better it is few friends to make;  
 Right good it were for thee to take  
 Their company—from very far!

That selfsame friend on whom, below,  
 Thou dost most faithfully reply,  
 If thou wilt open reason's eye  
 Is proved thy direst, deadliest foe.

Thou who art wholly unaware  
 How the world's order is designed,  
 Since thy foundations are the Wind  
 Thy structure is no more than Air.

Thy being is a boundary  
 That runs betwixt twain nothingness :  
 About thee all is substanceless,  
 Thyself, therein, Nonentity.

Ah, that life's precious capital  
 Was spilled so soon and drained away,  
 That Destiny in ambush lay  
 For many hearts, to slay them all :

And, for the world that after waits,  
 No man has ever come from there  
 To bring us tidings, how they fare  
 Whose journey lies beyond its gates.

The swollen head of human pride  
 May swiftly be reduced with wine,  
 And by this recipe divine  
 The firmest knot is soon untied.

Had Satan taken, strong and neat,  
 One draught of wine, as I do now,  
 He would have laid his stubborn brow  
 Adoringly at Adam's feet.



Thy beauty, saki, puts to shame  
 The goblet that was Jamshid's pride :  
 Not endless days, but to have died  
 For thee, confers the truest fame.

Each particle of the dear earth  
 Beneath thy tread that humbly lies  
 Brings greater brightness to my eyes  
 Than all the suns' celestial mirth.

I cannot see what Heaven won  
 Of profit bringing me to birth,  
 Or gained, by laying me in Earth,  
 Of glory and dominion.

Nor is it patent to my sense,  
 Nor have I heard from any man,  
 Pursuant to what mighty plan  
 Fate brought me here, and bore me hence.

I never sipped, as I recall,  
 The limpid wine of glad relief,  
 Without the hand of sullen grief  
 Poured me its cup of bitter gall.

I never dipped in joy my bread  
 Into the salt of any friend,  
 But that as surely in the end  
 My heart in sorrow broke and bled.

The brick that crowns the winevat's head  
 Is fairer far than Jamshid's throne :  
 Wine, in a crystal goblet shown,  
 Outglories Mary's wondrous bread.

The sigh of grief that at the morn  
 Breaks from the drunkard's quenchless throat  
 Excels the penitential note  
 Groaned by the saintliest ever born.

As I was passing yesterday  
 Where potters ply their skilful trade,  
 I watched amazed, as each displayed  
 His cunning with the pliant clay.

And I beheld, as scarce I trust  
 They see who lack the gift of sight,  
 Those bowls they shaped for our delight  
 Were moulded from our fathers' dust.

If I am drunk and dissolute,  
 If Magian wine is my whole joy  
 Poured by my darling Magian boy,  
 So be it; these my temper suit.

Let other men, if so they please,  
 Pursue strange fancies in their mind :  
 I know the limits fate assigned  
 For me, and am content with these.

How long the knitted brow, my friend,  
 And why so troubled and so glum?  
 No traveller has ever come  
 By scowling to his journey's end.

Since my affair and thy affair  
 Is scarce controlled by thee and me,  
 Submit to Destiny's decree:  
 That wisdom is, the wise declare.

Now roses bloom, and it is just  
 That all the meadow shouts with joy:  
 Rejoice this day, my pretty boy:  
 Another week is gone to dust.

Drink wine, and cull the blossoms fair:  
 While yet thou gazest, full of mirth,  
 The roses turn again to earth,  
 The meadow withers and is bare.

I am not one to brood with fear  
 Upon the hour I shall depart:  
 That half of life delights my heart  
 Far more than this I suffer here.

I know the soul within my dust  
 Was given me by God on loan:  
 I'll yield what I could never own  
 When comes the time that yield I must.



This ancient hostelry, which those  
 May call the World who have the knack,  
 A stable is, where the poor hack  
 Of dawn and sunset takes repose.

Here Jamshid once high revel kept,  
 But now the feast is bare of him :  
 Bahram here hunted at his whim,  
 And here at last forever slept.

I cannot count what profits Doom  
 Our coming here, our being sped,  
 Nor tell the pattern that our thread  
 Of Being weaves upon life's loom.

I only know the brazen Sky  
 Whose conflagration fires the air  
 Burns all things lovely, and the fair  
 Converts to dust, without one sigh.

The secrets of Eternity  
 Are far beyond our finite ken :  
 We cannot riddle what the Pen  
 Of Fate has scribed for you and me.

In casual converse we engage  
 Behind the curtain of our day ;  
 But when the curtain falls, the play  
 Is done, and desolate the stage.

Look not for happiness from Fate,  
 For all life's yield is but a breath:  
 Each grain of dust records the death  
 Of some once lordly potentate.

♪ The world's affairs, as so they seem,  
 Nay, the whole universe complete  
 Is a delusion and a cheat,  
 A fantasy, an idle dream.

Ah, would there were a little space  
 Where I might lay me down in peace,  
 That my far journeying should cease  
 At some sequestered resting-place:

And, as a thousand ages pass,  
 There might be hope from the dark earth  
 In a new miracle of birth  
 To spring again, like summer's grass.

If my dear darling leaned on me  
 And pressed her ruby lips to mine,  
 If my glass held, in lieu of wine,  
 The Fount of Immortality:

Or were my music Venus' voice,  
 And Jesus' self my comrade glad,  
 Yet, if the heart in me was sad,  
 What reason were there to rejoice?

Swirling and spinning like a ball  
 Before the polo-stick of Fate,  
 Run right or left, yet run thou straight  
 And never speak a word at all:

Remembering that He Who throws  
 Into the field of mortal play  
 Thy ball and mine to spin to-day,  
 He knows the game, He knows, He knows !

The Book of Life before me lay  
 Open, to take an augury,  
 When on the instant, suddenly,  
 I heard a raptured mystic say:

"Happy is he who holds him near  
 His darling, lovely as the moon,  
 Upon a night that speeds not soon  
 But lingers slowly as a year."

Fear not the chances Time may bring  
 That driveth all before its blast:  
 Whatever comes is swiftly past,  
 And naught abides unaltering.

'This brief cash-moment that is thine,  
 Be glad in it, and frolicsome:  
 Fear not the moments yet to come,  
 And for those gone do not repine,

I fear we shall not after this  
 Revert into the world anew,  
 Nor with our loves, as now we do,  
 Consort in concord and in bliss.

Then for this moment, while we may,  
 Let us be glad, and count it gain:  
 Perchance, in a long life of pain,  
 This joy shall not return our way.

I bid thee drink no other wine  
 But this, the everlasting fount:  
 A fortune of delight, to count  
 In this brief hour the world is thine.

Truly it burneth like the fire,  
 But severeth sorrow instantly:  
 A Spring of Immortality——  
 Come, drink it to thy heart's desire!

For, since it scarcely in us lies  
 To know the certain and the true,  
 We cannot sit our whole life through  
 Conjecturing upon surmise.

Best is it, that we do not set  
 Our precious cup of wine aside,  
 But drink until beatified,  
 Not sober, nor inebriate.

It is stark folly, with despair  
 The heart's contentment to destroy,  
 To bruise and break the soul of joy  
 Against the rock of jagged care.

What dark and dreadful mysteries  
 The future holdeth, none may guess:  
 But wine's to drink, and loveliness  
 To worship—there's a world of ease!

Take Earth, and hurl it at the head  
 Of Heaven, and the world entire;  
 Drink wine, and stake thy heart's desire  
 On Beauty, ere thy flesh be dead.

No pretext is there to complain,  
 And mean entreaty makes small sense,  
 Since out of all departed hence  
 None ever came this way again.

We are the far and lofty goal  
 For which creation was designed:  
 Within the brain, that else were blind,  
 We are the vision's vital soul.

The vast circumference we see,  
 And call the world, is like a ring:  
 Know then, beyond all cavilling,  
 The impress of its seal is—we!



If thou wilt drink, to banish gloom,  
 Either with wise men take thy joy,  
 Or with a happy, laughing boy  
 In whose soft cheeks the roses bloom.

Yet drink not overmuch, nor be  
 Forever toping, to disgrace:  
 Drink little, in due time and place,  
 And drink in decent secrecy.

The loved one's brow against thy lip,  
 Her beauty fresher than the rose—  
 Still grasp the blossom while it glows,  
 Nor yield the wine-cup from thy grip.

Make haste to take thy fill of mirth,  
 Ere the cold blast of Fate arise  
 And drive our life-wisp down the skies  
 Like roses' petals spilled to earth.

Soft dew upon the rose's brow  
 Glistens this happy morn of Spring,  
 And by the meadow wandering  
 My fair one walks beside me now.

There is no loveliness to say  
 Upon the winter that is past:  
 Let us be jubilant at last,  
 And whisper of the glad to-day.

Ah, but my bones are sick and sore,  
 My heart is tortured with unease;  
 Some foeman plots my soul to seize,  
 Decreeing I may drink no more.

And stranger is this case of mine,  
 That in the anguish I endure  
 My sickness cannot find a cure  
 Except I drink forever wine.

A hundred dwellings by the surge  
 Of my sad heart are drowned in gore,  
 And there is fear ten thousand more  
 My bitter weeping may submerge.

My every lash is a lock-gate  
 That lets its separate runnel through,  
 And if I strike my lashes to  
 The flood will burst, and inundate.

Since God desired not in His might  
 What in my weakness I designed,  
 I do not think that I shall find  
 What I have willed to be the right.

If rectitude doth all belong  
 To what He only wished to be,  
 What I desired, as now I see,  
 Could scarce be otherwise than wrong.

They who encompassed all high wit  
 And of fine words the mastery bore,  
 Who in discovery of deep lore  
 A lantern for their fellows lit :

Those never won to find a way  
 Out of the darkness of our night :  
 They had their legend to recite,  
 And then in endless slumber lay.

He Who designed the Earth and Skies  
 And shaped the Heavens in His hand,  
 Hath laid full many a burning brand  
 On my poor heart, to cauterize.

And ah, the lips once ruby-red,  
 The brows resplendent as the moon  
 He laid beneath the dust too soon  
 For Earth to treasure, cold and dead.

To-day that Fate has given thee  
 Proves not to-morrow to be had,  
 And they are melancholy mad  
 Who fret for what the morn may be.

//Waste not the moment that thou hast,  
 If madness be not in thy heart,  
 For when this moment shall depart  
 It is not clear, what life shall last. //

It was a little drop of rain  
 That trickled down into the sea,  
 A mote of dust borne fitfully  
 In air, to sink to earth again.

What other was thy coming here,  
 What else was thy departing hence?  
 A fly, that gave brief evidence  
 And did as fleeting disappear.

Though all too many sins be mine,  
 Though foul and wretched is my soul,  
 I do not share their fearful dole  
 Who worship idols in the shrine.

At sunrise, when my body dies  
 In a last drunken revelry,  
 Wine and my love my care shall be,  
 Not threatened Hell, or Paradise.

Come, let us not consume with care  
 For what to-morrow may portend,  
 But let us count for gain, my friend,  
 The ready moment that we share.

For in the morn, when we are sped  
 From Earth's most ancient hostelry,  
 We join the immortal company  
 Of those ten thousand ages dead.

Who comprehendeth in his brain  
 All secrets of the Earth and Skies  
 Regardeth with indifferent eyes  
 Sorrow, and happiness, and pain.

Since every evil, as is sure,  
 And every good shall come to end,  
 What matters, if the plague descend  
 Or if high Heaven grant the cure?

A drop of Water once we were  
 In human loins deposited  
 That, by the Fire of passion sped,  
 Came forth to breathe the outer Air.

Since, when to-morrow's sun shall shine,  
 The breeze will bear our Dust away,  
 Let us be happy, while we may,  
 These two brief moments with the wine.

Now with a glass one measure high  
 Grief I will slay, old foe of mine,  
 And, having quaffed two pints of wine,  
 Count no man half as rich as I.

First, in divorce thrice over cried,  
 Reason and Faith I'll put away,  
 Then take, to crown my happy day,  
 The daughter of the grape for bride.

Alas, how wondrous suddenly  
 The Caravan of Life goes by:  
 'Tis well, this moment ere we die  
 To speed in happiness and glee.

Saki, why darest thou to-day  
 The resurrection's morn of fear:  
 Pass me the wine, while we are here:  
 The night is slipping fast away.

God fill my head, till life be o'er,  
 With love of maids angelic fair:  
 Here is my hand—God grant me there  
 The juice of grapes for evermore.

“God give thee penitence!” they cry,  
 And disapproving heads they shake:  
 What God shall give, if I not take  
 Far from His Presence let me die!

The sun has cast the noose of morn  
 Athwart the roof-top of the world;  
 The emperor of day has hurled  
 His bead, our goblet to adorn.

Drink wine: for at the first dawn's rays  
 The proclamation of desire  
 Rang through the universe entire,  
 And bade men drink through all the days.

Grave cadi of the learned brow,  
 We idlers far outlabour thee;  
 And, spite our drunken revelry,  
 We are still soberer than thou.

We drink the liquor grapes have bled,  
 But thou the blood of fellow-men:  
 Justly declare—which of us, then,  
 The greater share of blood has shed?

How long, O Lord, must I endure  
 Life's mean deceits and trickeries?  
 How long must I consume the lees,  
 And never taste the liquor pure?

I would Life's saki, with his hand  
 Still dripping with foul treachery,  
 Might pass my bowl of life to me,  
 To pour its dregs into the sand.

My darling, for the love of whom  
 My thwarted heart is so much pained  
 Another's charms have now enchained,  
 And made the prisoner of gloom.

Then whither shall I seek for ease,  
 How treat, what I must now endure,  
 Since he, who should have been my cure,  
 Is victim to the same disease?

One draught of wine is greater worth  
 Than Káús' Realm, Kobád's high throne;  
 Tús' broad dominions do not own  
 An equal treasure, nor wide Earth.

And the deep sigh upon the dawn  
 Heaved from the hopeless lover's breast  
 Is truer music than the best  
 From false ascetics' bosoms drawn.

Think not a longer life is thine  
 Than sixty summers from thy birth:  
 Set never foot upon the earth  
 Except thy head be full of wine.

Ere thy head's bowl is broken up  
 To make the pitcher others lack,  
 Take not the pitcher from thy back  
 Nor from thy fingers yield the cup.

This little while, till Fate shall smite  
 And life's last fever burn the brow,  
 Come, let us drink, to-day and now,  
 This wine of our supreme delight.

For when the heavens do their worst,  
 In the dread hour when we must leave,  
 No quarter will the heavens give  
 Nor even water for our thirst.



Much have I wandered o'er the face  
 Of earth, by mountain and by plain,  
 And all my wandering was in vain:  
 The world is not a better place.

Though pain has plagued my every day,  
 I am contented, truth to tell;  
 For if my life passed never well,  
 At least it passed right well away.

Thou passest all thy life away  
 On worldly interest intent,  
 Not heeding the predicament  
 Of that tremendous Final Day.

Come to thyself at last, my friend;  
 Look all around; consider well  
 What others in their day befell,  
 And how Time served them in the end.

He who has written in his heart  
 One line, as Reason might dictate,  
 No single moment of his fate  
 Unprofitably lets depart.

Either he labours all his days  
 Seeking his God alone to please,  
 Or he will choose his body's ease  
 And to his lips the beaker raise.

Clean from Nonentity we came  
 And all unclean we did depart;  
 Entered with gladness in our heart  
 And left in sorrow and in shame.

The Water weeping from our eyes  
 Betrayed the Fire within our breast;  
 Our life's to Air, and for the rest  
 In the dark Earth our body lies.

Love is the sun, that shines above  
 In spheres of immortality:  
 Bird of fair fortune, in the tree  
 Of gladness singing—that is Love.

It is not Love, to weep for dole  
 Unceasing, like the nightingale:  
 Love is to bleed and not bewail,  
 To die, and not demean the soul.

The day it is not given me  
 To slake with purest wine my throat,  
 Although the surest antidote  
 Is mine to take, 'twill poison be.

Poisonous is the world's despair,  
 And its sole antidote is wine;  
 So, while the ruby cup is mine,  
 For poisons I have not a care.

None in this world may stretch his hand  
 To cull the rose-cheeks of the fair,  
 But that the briar of despair  
 Sticks in his heart its stinging brand.

Regard the comb, that may not hold  
 Within its grasp the darling's tress,  
 Except in utter ruthlessness  
 It has been cleft a hundredfold.

I do not know, and cannot tell  
 If He, Who mixed me in a trice,  
 Determined me for Paradise  
 Or damned my soul to horrid Hell.

Yet give me wine, my idol-love,  
 And music, where the poppies blow:  
 I'll gladly spend my cash below—  
 Take thou thy credit-heav'n above!

"No more", I cried in pious mood,  
 "Will I consume the rose-red wine:  
 It is the life-blood of the vine,  
 And I will drink no longer blood."

Thereat spake Reason, elder mine:  
 "Say'st thou in earnest?" And quoth I:  
 "Nay, but in error; 'twas a lie;  
 How should I not be drinking wine?"

O let me with good wine be fed—  
 My dear companions, do not fail!—  
 Until my cheeks, now amber-pale,  
 Be changed to rubies, rich and red.

And when I die, as die I must,  
 Wash my cold body all with wine;  
 Carve me the timber of the vine  
 For coffin, to preserve my dust.

So long as these are given me—  
 A lovely maid beside a stream,  
 Red roses, and the rich wine's gleam—  
 So long my heart shall dance with glee.

Since I was born, now life is mine,  
 And till the day that I shall die,  
 I shall be drinking, even as I  
 Have ever drunk, and do drink, wine!

Now the lascivious breeze of morn  
 Has rent the raiment of the rose,  
 Her beauty, warmly as it glows,  
 Delights the nightingale forlorn.

Sit in these shades, and take thy mirth,  
 For all too often, as I fear,  
 The rose shall spill her beauty here  
 On the cold clay, when we are earth.

Khayyám, he earns the high disdain  
 And merited contempt of doom  
 Who impotently sits in gloom  
 Beneath Time's avalanche of pain.

Then fill the crystal beaker up  
 And drink to the lamenting lute,  
 Before the day its voice is mute,  
 And shattered on the rock thy cup.

When ye are met in harmony,  
 Beloved friends, in after days,  
 And on each other's beauty gaze,  
 And are rejoiced by what ye see;

And when the saki, standing there,  
 Takes in his hand the Magian wine,  
 Think on the anguish that is mine  
 And O, recall me in a prayer.

Better at tavern, and with wine,  
 To lay Thee all my secrets bare,  
 Than to intone the parrot prayer  
 And Thou not with me, in the shrine.

Thy Name is last and first to tell;  
 Whatever is, save Thee, is nil;  
 Then cherish me, if so Thy Will  
 Be done—or burn my soul in Hell!

Lo, Thou hast shattered my adored  
 And precious cup, and spilled my wine;  
 Against my face the gate divine  
 Of gladness Thou hast barred, O Lord.

Yea, all my rose-red wine is sunk  
 Into the dust, because of Thee;  
 Dust in my mouth—so let it be,  
 Dear Lord, but art Thou haply drunk?

The Potter whose eternal Will  
 Fashioned that pot, the human head,  
 In shaping pots, when all is said,  
 Exhibited amazing skill.

On Being's table, upside-down,  
 He set the pot that was His pride,  
 And promptly filled it with a tide  
 Of melancholy to the crown.

With Thy forgiveness to sustain,  
 My load of sin I do not fear,  
 Nor dread, with Thy provision near,  
 The far road's weariness and pain.

And if Thy mercy raises me  
 Washed white and clean on the Last Day,  
 I shall not shrink to walk that way  
 However black my record be.

Heav'n never lifts in wondrous birth  
 From the dark dust a rose aflame  
 But after, shattering the same,  
 Commits it all again to earth.

And if the clouds could draw above  
 Like vapour this our precious clay,  
 Unto the Resurrection Day  
 Would rain the blood of those we love.

The very mountains, could they slake  
 Their thirst in wine, would dance for glee:  
 Exceptionally mad they be  
 That to the wine exception take.

Here is a pledge I gladly give:  
 I'll ne'er repent of drinking wine,  
 For 'tis a thing that doth refine  
 A man, and make him fit to live.

Lift high the goblet, O my fair,  
 My heart's beloved! Bring forth the bowl,  
 And through the meadow we will stroll,  
 And by the river murmuring there.

How many beauties cypress-tall,  
 Moon-lovely, Heav'n hath brought to clay,  
 And made them bowls another day,  
 And turned them goblets, one and all.

Last night I shattered (woe is me !)  
 My earthen bowl against a stone :  
 It was my drunken rage alone  
 Drove me to such indecency.

I heard the stricken pitcher cry,  
 As clear as if it had a tongue :  
"I was like thee, when I was young ;  
 One day thou shalt be even as I."

O Thou Sublime o'er human sense,  
 Whose Essence reason far excels,  
 Untroubled when Thy slave rebels,  
 Not needing my obedience :

All drunken with my sins am I,  
 Yet having hope to sober me  
 That Thou, of Thy great clemency,  
 Wilt grant me mercy, when I die.

Yon brave inhabitants who lie  
 All turned to dust and in the tomb  
 Fulfil their dark and dusty doom :  
 Their scattered motes asunder fly.

What was the potion they partook  
 That, till the Day of Reckoning,  
 Lost to themselves and everything,  
 All loves, all labours they forsook ?



At the Mind's banquet of delight  
 A splendid proof old Reason speaks;  
 Among the Persians and the Greeks  
 He argues left, and argues right:

"If any fool has e'er expressed  
 The view that wine is little good,  
 How can I heed his turpitude,  
 Since God Himself says, wine is best?"

Now, in the hour that doth remain  
 Before all chance is at an end,  
 Lift from the heart of thy dear friend  
 His lover's load of grief and pain.

For Beauty's kingdom, Beauty's throne  
 Abide not everlastingly,  
 And though these now belong to thee,  
 Be sure that soon they shall be flown.

The dawn is in the sky; rise up,  
 My simple, silly, pretty boy,  
 And with the ruby wine of joy  
 Incarnadine the crystal cup.

The borrowed moment that we share  
 In this dark corner of decay,  
 Once sped, pursue it as we may  
 We shall not find it anywhere.

Wine is a ruby liquified,  
 Quarried within the hollow bowl;  
 The cup's a body, and its soul  
 The liquor's coruscating tide.

Yon gleaming glass of crystal clear  
 Now laughing with the crimson wine  
 Enshrines the life-blood of the vine,  
 And all its glitter is a tear.-

Those who upon dissembling rest  
 Their edifice of piety  
 Affect much difference to see  
 Between the spirit and the breast.

Henceforth I'll strut before my home,  
 A wine-jug on my topmost lock;  
 And if they take me for a cock,  
 Why, they can make a saw my comb.

My dearest, for whose life I pray  
 It may be long as is my grief,  
 Made new beginning, past belief,  
 In kindliness this very day.

She paused one moment as she passed  
 Upon my wasted flesh to glance,  
 As if to murmur, "Take thy chance:  
 Do good, and on the waters cast!"

True, I drink wine, but merely sip,  
 Not gulp, like some, to drunkenness,  
 Nor reach out greedy hands, unless  
 To get the goblet in my grip.

If thou shouldst care to know my aim  
 In paying worship to the wine,  
 'Tis not to make my self my shrine,  
 As thou art doing, to thy shame.

The saki's lip is tincture sweet  
 Of rubies, grief's specific cure;  
 His love, the spirit's pasture pure,  
 The heart's accoutrement complete.

And whoso by that flood of gloom,  
 Love's thwarted passion, is not slain,  
 In Noah's Ark, his trivial gain,  
 Lies buried, living in the tomb.

Last evening in the potter's store  
 Two thousand heads I counted, each  
 A pot, some gifted still with speech,  
 Some fallen silent evermore.

And suddenly one pot, more bold,  
 Lifted his voice upon the air:  
 "Where is the potter now, and where  
 Are they that bought, and they that sold?"

I have the crown of Khan for sale,  
 Kay's diadem—come, who will buy?  
 A turban-length of muslin I  
 Will barter for a reed-pipe's wail.

This girded footman of the train  
 Of pious fraud, the rosary—  
 Who wants a bargain, suddenly?  
 A glass of wine is all I'd gain.

Last evening, drunken with good sack,  
 I passed the tavern open wide,  
 And there a bearded elder spied  
 Drunk, and a wine-jug on his back.

“Why, art thou not ashamed”, I said,  
 “To let thy Maker see thee thus?”  
 He answered, “God is generous—  
 Let's drink good wine, till we are dead.”

The tender grape is newly wed;  
 Shed not her honour utterly,  
 When filthy penitents there be  
 Whose heart-blood may be rightly shed.

Two thousand reprobates I know,  
 Gluttons debauched; their bodies' blood  
 May well be spilled into the mud;  
 Pray, do not spill the wine-cup so!

No man hath ever found the way  
 Behind this veil of mystery,  
 No mind unravelled utterly  
 The tangle of the world's array.

No other lodging-place know I  
 Except the earth's heart, dark and cold:  
 These fables are not quickly told—  
 Drink, these brief moments ere we die!

Come, darling wine, to my embrace,  
 My only love, fool that I be,  
 And I will drink unceasingly,  
 And never fear for the disgrace.

Come, help me to my drinking now,  
 And I will drink, till all who spy  
 My rounded paunch will gape, and cry,  
 "Ho, vat of wine, whence comest thou?"

The greatest infamy I know  
 Is to be known for a good name;  
 I can conceive no meaner shame  
 Than to be shocked by Fortune's blow.

Better it is, entranced to be  
 By the ripe fragrance of the grape,  
 Than gaze upon oneself agape,  
 Puffed up with one's own piety.

“Drink thou less deep than heretofore”,  
 They are forever telling me;  
 And, “What excuse is there for thee  
 Forever on the cup to pore?”

Excuse? Why, the beloved’s cheek,  
 The wine a-glitter in dawn’s light—  
 Declare, if thou be just and right,  
 What clearer plea is there to seek?

Of worldly goods to drink withal,  
 And clothe thy naked modesty—  
 It shall be surely pardoned thee  
 To seek for these, if these be all.

Be wise in time—for nothing worth  
 Is all the rest that may remain—  
 And barter not for so small gain  
 The precious days thou hast on earth.

Of all that is not, and that is,  
 I know the seen and manifest;  
 The inward heart of every crest  
 I know, and all declivities.

Yet, spite the learning I possess,  
 Let me be shamed by what I know  
 If I descry, the way I go,  
 A further reach than drunkenness.

Riddle me this; a bowl I know  
 Which Reason doth high praise allow,  
 And in affection on its brow  
 A hundred kisses doth bestow.

Yet Time, the fickle potter, who  
 So skilfully designed a cup  
 So fragile, loves to lift it up  
 And dash it to the earth anew.

Now, in this hour ere night descend  
 And griefs assail and slay the soul,  
 Bid them bring forth the crimson bowl  
 And pour the wine, beloved friend.

Think not, my foolish, silly swain,  
 Thou art as gold, that on a day  
 Men should commit thee to cold clay  
 Thereafter to bring out again.

Saki, the passion in my soul  
 Bursts forth, and raises loud its voice;  
 My drunkenness, as I rejoice,  
 Surpasses all my will's control.

Although my hairs are hoary white,  
 Yet I am glad, that thy soft down  
 Has smoothed my old brow's weary frown  
 And waked my heart to Spring's delight.

The Heavens are a girdle bound  
 About my shrunk and weary thighs;  
 A trickle from my tear-stained eyes  
 Great Oxus, surging o'er the ground.

Hell is a spark that upward spires  
 Out of my unavailing sigh,  
 And Paradise, a moment I  
 Am easy with my heart's desires.

The wine and the beloved for me!  
 Take you your convent and your church,  
 If after Paradise ye search:  
 If I'm for Hell, so let it be.

Declare, what shortcoming ye see  
 Me guilty of, since long ago  
 The Eternal Artist drew me so  
 Upon the Slate of Destiny.

Of all departed on the road  
 That leads beyond this vale of pain,  
 What traveller e'er came again  
 With tidings of that far abode?

I charge thee, therefore, in the day  
 That on this highroad thou dost run  
 Where lovers plead, leave naught undone,  
 For thou shalt not return this way.



While there are bones and blood in thee,  
 While veins are knit, and sinews tied,  
 Seek not to set thy foot outside  
 The narrow house of Destiny.

Disdain thy stubborn neck to bend,  
 Be Persian Rustam thy dread foe,  
 Nor meanly crave for favours, though  
 Arabian Hátim be thy friend.

If in the season of the Spring  
 A maid of loveliness divine  
 Pours me a cup of ruby wine,  
 Beside the meadow whispering:

Though this be blasphemy to say,  
 Yet I declare the meanest cur  
 Of nobler worth, if I prefer  
 To think on Paradise that day.

Knowing the mercy of thy God,  
 And thy Creator's clemency,  
 However great thy sins may be  
 Despair not, neither fear His rod.

Though thou be dissolute, and though  
 Thou slumberest drunkenly to-day,  
 To-morrow on thy crumbling clay  
 Abundant mercy He will show.

Better is holy abstinence

From whatsoever is not wine

Poured by soft hands of beauties fine  
Stretched drunkenly in shady tents.

Of all delights by man possessed

From Moon to legendary Fish,

The drunkard's draught is all I wish:  
Wine, and the rolling road, are best.

O every grass so sweet and green

That springs beside the purling stream

Is the soft down, as it doth seem,  
Of buried beauty, once serene.

Tread not with so indifferent care

Upon the meadow; for alas!

Where now thy foot is pressed on grass  
Lie rosy cheeks of maidens fair.

While I am sober, joyous glee

Is hid from sight, and not to find;

When I am drunken, in my mind  
I mark a great deficiency.

There is a state betwixt the twain,

Not yet besotted by the wine

Nor sober: ah, that it were mine,  
For there's true life alone to gain.

I pressed my lip against the bowl  
 In an extremity of greed,  
 Seeking to snatch my ardent need,  
 Long life for my too fleeting soul.

Soft spake the bowl and secretly,  
 As lip against my lip it lay:  
 "I too was once as thou to-day;  
 This little moment, bear with me!"

Happy the man who grasps his need,  
 The ruby wine, the loved one's tress,  
 And sprawls, to crown his happiness,  
 On the soft margin of the mead.

There he may drink, as takes his whim,  
 Not thinking on the wheeling skies,  
 Till so much wine within him lies  
 That joy entire inhabits him.

The Heavens since creation's day  
 No increase, but of sorrow, gave;  
 Sent down no single spirit, save  
 They snatched another soul away.

If those that are not come to birth  
 As yet could know what manner we  
 Are buffeted by Destiny,  
 They surely would not come to Earth.

Happy is he with luck to live  
 Unfettered in these slavish days,  
 Content to take, with grateful praise,  
 What gift soever God may give.

He counts his blessings one by one  
 And gladly grasps the moment's bliss,  
 Free, with an artless lass to kiss,  
 And wine to drink, ere life is done.

How long of my too little sense  
 Shall I make impotent parade?  
 Weary and sick my heart is made  
 By my sublime incompetence.

Henceforth I'll wind about my waist  
 The girdle unbelievers wear,  
 Shamed by the sins I cannot bear  
 And by my Moslemhood disgraced.

How can I bear my wings to spread  
 About another flame to fly,  
 Or, with thy love to finish by,  
 Begin with a new love instead?

The tears that from my lashes race  
 Suffer me not in any wise,  
 However brief, to lift mine eyes  
 And fix them on another's face.

Yon whirling sphere of Heav'n above,  
 Upon destruction darkly bent,  
 To double murder is intent:  
 Thy precious soul and mine, my love.

Then sit beside me in the mead,  
 And drink sweet wine in easy bliss;  
 The Earth shall spring anew like this  
 In richer verdure, where we bleed.

Knowest thou, by what way it came  
 And how, that if the tongues of men  
 Talk upon freedom, cedars then,  
 And lilies, have the chiefest fame?

'Tis that the one, though stuck about  
 With tenfold tongues, sits silently,  
 While t' other, though its tally be  
 Two hundred tongues, thrusts not one out.

The several particles discrete  
 That in the crystal cup unite,  
 No drunkard's hand would deem it right  
 To take and shatter it complete.

Whose was the tender love that made  
 Those lovely hands, so soft and white,  
 Those beauteous faces? By whose spite  
 Were they in utter ruin laid?

What care if life be sharp or sweet,  
 Since it is passing by for sure;  
 Or if in Balkh or Nishapúr  
 Our shallow measure is complete :

Drink wine, my friend ; for many a moon  
 When our short span is shuffled through  
 Shall turn from sickle unto new,  
 From new to sickle, all too soon.

Tell me, where is the trusty friend  
 To whom I may the mystery  
 Of Man declare, how started he,  
 And what has ever been his end :

By sore affliction stricken, blent  
 Of sorrow's clay, awhile he passed  
 About the world, but at the last  
 Lifted his weary foot, and went.

'Tis time to quaff the morning cup :  
 My lucky-footed lad, arise !  
 Play music to the rosy skies  
 And bring the bowl, and fill it up.

A hundred thousand such as those  
 Famed tyrants who have swayed the earth  
 In burning June were brought to birth,  
 And buried by December's snows.

Those venturers who took not rest  
 But wore the world out with their feet,  
 And measured Earth and Heav'n complete  
 Still urgent on their boundless quest:

I do not know, when all was done  
 And their far labours left behind,  
 If they more clearly had in mind  
 God's Truth, than when they first begun.

How long the incense and the cross,  
 The mosque-lamp and the minaret;  
 How long the balance-striking yet  
 Of Heav'n for profit, Hell for loss?

See, how upon the Slate of Doom  
 Our Master, from eternity,  
 Inscribed the sum of all to be  
 And for revision left no room.

Of that brave liquor flaming red  
 Wherein new life is to be found  
 Fill high the bowl, and pass it round,  
 Whatever pain be in thy head.

Come, in my fingers let it lie:  
 The world's affairs are all a tale,  
 And life—O hasten, do not fail!—  
 Is every moment passing by..

The revolution of the years  
 Wherein we came, and shall be gone,  
 No known beginning rests upon,  
 Nor any end thereof appears.

And I have heard no man declare  
 The truth behind this mystery :  
 From whence our coming-in may be,  
 And our departing unto where.

Soft showers bathe, this bright New Year,  
 The cheeks of the anemone :  
 Rise up, my friend, and seek for thee  
 The wine-bowl with intent sincere.

For lo, the meadow where to-day  
 We sport together blissfully  
 To-morrow, though thou shalt not see,  
 Will spring the greener from thy clay.

It is small sense to give thee pain,  
 Or use thyself despitefully ;  
 The portion Fate assigned to thee  
 Toil will not turn to greater gain.

What in eternity was writ  
 To be thy lot, to thee shall fall :  
 Look not to add one jot at all,  
 Nor fear to lack a single whit.



If truly thou possessest, friend,  
 The key to every mystery,  
 Why sufferest thou thyself to be  
 So bowed by cares, and to no end?

Since all that chances upon earth  
 Can scarce be changed to thy desire,  
 Do not to larger luck aspire,  
 But thy brief moments live in mirth.

Yon sphere, that slew so ruthlessly  
 King Mahmud and his favourite boy,  
 Robs many a thousand of all joy,  
 But tells to none the mystery.

Be drinking wine: for unto none  
 Are giv'n the long years all men crave,  
 And none, once venturing to the grave,  
 Returns, to tell how he has done.

Men say, that Heav'n is perfect bliss  
 With dark-eyed maids to sport all day;  
 The juice of grapes, I dare to say,  
 Is sweeter, and the cup to kiss.

Leave credit-joys to such as are  
 Thereby bemused, and as it comes  
 Seize thy cash-happiness; for drums  
 Make fairest music played afar.

Be happy, for the anguish Time  
 Still has in store is infinite ;  
 But in the skies this blessed night  
 The planets sing in perfect chime.

Too soon thy fragile flesh shall be  
 Dust for the bricks that men will take  
 To line the palaces they make  
 For their brief hour of revelry.

Since it falls not to me, within  
 This world to dwell eternally,  
 One moment without wine to be,  
 And the beloved, were grievous sin.

How long wilt thou discourse, brave wit,  
 Upon Eternity and Time ?  
 What matters if the earth's wide clime  
 Be either's, once we're gone from it ?

O Time, who dost thyself confess  
 The wrongs by mortal men endured,  
 The convent where thou art immured  
 Is dedicate to ruthlessness.

Thy blessings on the base alone  
 Are showered ; men of nobler part  
 Thou punishest ; which proves thou art  
 A donkey, or a doting crone.

Against the flesh I ever strive  
 In strenuous fight: what can I more?  
 My evils deeds afflict me sore:  
 How shall I save my soul alive?

I know indeed that of Thy Grace  
 Thou wilt forgive my worst; yet in  
 The shame that Thou hast seen my sin  
 How dare I look upon Thy face?

I come to purchase ruby wine:  
 New wine or aged, both are well:  
 Then for two barley-corns I'll sell  
 The world, if thou wouldst have it thine.

Thou warnest, "Where wilt thou depart  
 When drinking's done, and thou art dead?"  
 Come, bring thy wine, and then be sped  
 Wherever best may please thy heart.

Since every truth this world contains  
 Is mere contingency, my heart,  
 Why with vain sorrow dost thou smart  
 And plague thyself with useless pains?

To Fate surrender, with good grace;  
 Accept resigned its less or more;  
 Whate'er the Pen has writ thy score  
 No jot thereof shall it efface.

Ah, since I lost thy loving touch  
 Grief grips my soul, and slays my heart;  
 And still I yearn, where'er thou art,  
 If but thy raiment's hem to clutch.

A thousand hearts, when thou 'rt away,  
 In quenchless flames of torment burn;  
 A thousand souls, at thy return,  
 To be thy sacrifice do pray.

The secret thou with God dost share  
 Be sure to keep from mortal eyes,  
 And deem the unworthy and unwise  
 Too frail, such mysteries to bear.

Consider well what thou shalt do  
 With every creature God has made,  
 Supposing all shall be repaid  
 By them to thee in measure true.

Happy the heart a prisoner  
 To grief, be His the hand that ties;  
 Happy the head in dust that lies  
 If on that road His footsteps err.

By sorrow's arrows be not grieved  
 When winged against thee by the Friend;  
 Whatever gift He condescend  
 To give, be all with joy received.

Lovers, and all in disarray,  
 Dishevelled, drunken and distraught  
 Where the fair idols dwell, and naught  
 But wine to worship, this glad day—

With self hood to oblivion hurled  
 We stand emancipate, alone  
 Attached to God's eternal Throne  
 As at the dawning of the world.

My sum of days is slipping by  
 Alas! in vanity complete,  
 Unhallowed every crumb I eat,  
 Unholy every breath I sigh.

How black my record: not begun  
 The good that I was charged to do,  
 The ill I was forbidden to  
 Alack! most scrupulously done.

If I have never sought to thread  
 The pearl obedience on life's cord,  
 If I have never swept, dear Lord,  
 The dust of sin from my hoar head:

Yet I despair not to attain  
 The threshold of Thy throne of grace,  
 Since at no time, and in no place  
 I ever said that One was twain.

There shall be Paradise, men say,  
 With dark-eyed maidens of delight,  
 Tart wine to taste through all the night,  
 And honey sweet to suck all day.

If then the wine and well-loved friend  
 We worship, wherein lies the shame,  
 Seeing that there awaits the same  
 When all life's tasks are at an end?

These simple things if they be mine—  
 A loaf the purest heart of wheat,  
 A thigh of lamb to be my meat,  
 For thirst a flagon of good wine:

And if, to cheer my wilderness,  
 A maid refusing not my kiss,  
 That were a life of perfect bliss  
 No sceptred sultan can possess.

When from my withered bones and thine  
 The precious spirit shall be fled,  
 The dust of fellows long since dead  
 Awhile our ashes shall confine.

But when the years have passed, why then  
 They'll sweep along thy earth and mine  
 And mould it into bricks, to line  
 Fair sepulchres for other men.

The pious say, all sinful men  
 Who dare God's holy Laws defy,  
 In whatsoever guise they die  
 Shall likewise be raised up again.

Wherefore we pass our lives away  
 With the beloved, and the cup,  
 That haply so we may spring up  
 When breaks the Resurrection Day.

All desolation, wheel of Fate,  
 Deriveth from thy senseless ire;  
 Injustice is thy sole desire,  
 And humankind thy ancient hate.

And, O dark Earth, if thy deep breast  
 Were cloven to the light of day,  
 How many pearls of purest ray  
 Would glitter, to thy bosom pressed!

The drunkard and the dissolute,  
 Men say, are destined unto Hell:  
 That is a foolish tale to tell,  
 And takes small logic to refute.

For if the drunken lover's band  
 Are doomed to burn in hellish fire,  
 To-morrow Paradise entire  
 Will show as empty as my hand.

Yon cup, with such consummate skill  
 As potters shaped it from the clay,  
 Lies shattered now, and cast away  
 For men to trample as they will.

But O, be wary; do not tread  
 Contemptuously, friend, or hard:  
 The bowl that is this broken shard  
 Was fashioned of a lovely head.

And those that strive to-day and strain  
 At Reason's labour for their wage  
 Might just as usefully engage  
 In milking bulls, for all they gain.

They would be better served to don  
 The wear of fools, the cap and bells;  
 The world we live in blithely sells  
 Sour herbs for Reason—going, gone!

Khayyám, why all this tragic grief  
 Because of a small sin or two?  
 It yields small profit, so to do:  
 Regrets are foolish, past belief.

For think: if sin were not, what room  
 For God's forgiveness would there be?  
 God has engaged to pardon thee  
 If thou shouldst sin: then why such gloom?



It is the time of dawn : upspring,  
 Sweet beauty delicately fine,  
 And slowly, slowly sip the wine,  
 And sweep the lute's melodious string.

For all now sojourning on Earth  
 Not long, not ever shall abide ;  
 And of the others, who have died,  
 Not one shall come again to birth.

When I shall stand abashed and bowed  
 And only hope remains to me,  
 When the hard hand of Destiny  
 Has plucked me of my feathers proud :

I charge you not to make my clay  
 Except into a rounded bowl ;  
 Perchance I shall regain my soul  
 When the wine's fragrance wafts my way.

I bid you, when I come to die,  
 Bathe my cold body all in wine,  
 And let the chant of grapes divine  
 Be the sad threnody ye sigh.

If, on the day when all shall rise,  
 Ye should desire to search for me,  
 Be sure my dust, as you shall see,  
 Before the tavern's threshold lies.

Again they bid me: "Drink not wine,  
 Else thou shalt suck calamity;  
 The flames of Hell, for final fee,  
 At the Last Judgment shall be thine."

That may be true: yet greater worth  
 Than Earth and Heaven, as I count,  
 Is the brief moment at the fount  
 Of wine thou pullest, full of mirth.

A stark and solemn truth I say,  
 Not as in parables to preach:  
 We are but counters, all and each,  
 That Heaven moveth at its play.

We stir awhile, as if at will,  
 About the chessboard of the days,  
 Till in the box of death Time lays  
 Our pawns, to be for ever still.

Upon the tower of Tús so high  
 I saw a bird, that brooded there  
 O'er Káús' skull, picked white and bare,  
 That grinning at its feet did lie.

And thus to that poor cranium  
 I heard it croon in sorry rhyme:  
 "Ah, where is now the bells' sweet chime,  
 The brave lamenting of the drum?"

If thou shouldst win into thy grasp  
 A goodly bowl from niggard Fate,  
 Drink wine, where good men congregate,  
 Drink ever, where the thirsty gasp.

For He, Who this world's palace reared  
 In splendour, small attention owes  
 To thy puffed-out mustachios  
 And my pathetic, blustering beard.

Forever, cruel Destiny,  
 With grief thou tearest at my heart,  
 Forever thou dost rend apart  
 The fragile garment of my glee.

The Air that fans my gentle lust  
 Thou turnest to a raging Fire,  
 And the cool Waters of desire  
 Convertest in my mouth to Dust.

What is this wild regret in thee  
 For wealth ungotten, worlds ungained?  
 Hast thou marked any, that remained  
 Upon the earth eternally?

The very breath within thy bone  
 Is counted out, and briefly lent;  
 And life must be discreetly spent,  
 Since it is only thine on loan.

One hand the Holy Book doth hold,  
 One clasps the bowl of flaming wine:  
 Now only lawful joys are mine,  
 Now with the lawless I make bold.

Beneath the skies' uplifted span,  
 The turquoise-marbled dome on high,  
 Not utter infidel am I  
 And neither wholly Mussulman.

There was a many night and day  
 Ere ever thou and I were born;  
 And still the spinning skies are sworn  
 To persevere upon their play.

O have a care, and gently tread  
 On the dark dust beneath thy feet;  
 There lie the glances shy and sweet  
 That charmed a lover long since dead.

Now from the bowl, wherein I see  
 No mischief lurks, but only joy,  
 Drink deep the wine, my pretty boy,  
 And give another glass to me.

Drink to the ending of the day,  
 Ere Doom our cup of life shall break,  
 And potters by the wayside make  
 New flagons of our crumbled clay.

Rise up, my heart, and let us sweep  
 With gentle hand the singing lute,  
 Confound fair fame and ill repute,  
 And drink sweet wine, and drink it deep.

For one good flask of vintage stock  
 The prayer-rug we will blithely sell,  
 Then dash all fame, and shame as fell,  
 A fragile glass, against the rock.

My friend, suck not this world's dismay,  
 Forever grieving to no gain;  
 My friend, grieve not, I say again;  
 The world spins swiftly to decay.

Since what is past is dead and gone,  
 And what's to come is still unclear,  
 Grieve not, but live in merry cheer:  
 What was, and is not, think not on.

Be blithe, my love; for lo, the moon  
 Of festival will surely rise,  
 And a new day (if thou art wise)  
 Of gladness will be dawning soon.

The sickle moon is pale and shrunk,  
 Bent double in sheer misery;  
 This sorrow too, as thou shalt see,  
 In pleasure's waves will soon be sunk.

In loving Thee I feel no shame,  
 Though men rebuke me and revile,  
 Nor will dispute and quibble, while  
 I know, and they ignore, Love's claim.

Love is a potion true men take  
 To cure their hearts of every ill;  
 But cowards, having not the will,  
 Do best, this goblet to forsake.

The manner that I look upon  
 This life's affairs, and analyse,  
 The whole round world, as view my eyes,  
 Is vanity, and better gone.

Then to Almighty God be praise,  
 For truly, wheresoe'er I turn,  
 Naught but vexation I discern,  
 And disillusion all my days.

Let us clap hands together now  
 And dance in happy unison,  
 And stamp with jollity upon  
 Old sorrow's lined and frosty pow.

Now, ere the dawn suffuse the sky,  
 Come, let us drink the morning cup,  
 For many a dawn shall tumble up  
 When we have not a breath to sigh.

If thou art famous in the town  
 Men say thou schemest human ill,  
 And if obscure thou sittest, still  
 Men say thou hast a threatening frown.

Be thou Elijah come again,  
 Or Alexander's godly guide,  
 Better is it unknown to abide  
 And to ignore all other men.

I know not why the Hand whose joy  
 Was to create in order due  
 The temperaments, exact and true,  
 Is pleased to sap them and destroy.

If they were well, as was His aim,  
 Why did He shatter them again?  
 And if they were not well, why then  
 Since He designed them, who's to blame?

Since it is not within our power  
 To vary this our mortal lot,  
 To add, or take from it, one jot,  
 'Tis mad to sit in gloom and glower.

For this our life, and these our acts  
 Come not into my hands and thine  
 To mould them to our own design,  
 As children modelling with wax.

Whatever good or ill there be  
 Locked up within the human brain,  
 Whatever joy, whatever pain,  
 Is doomed by Fate, or Destiny:

Assign not these to the far skies;  
 For, as the reason showeth clear,  
 Weaklier than thou is Heaven's sphere  
 A thousandfold, and no more wise.

Mark yon foundations of the skies  
 How they hang wholly overthrown,  
 And abject, in disorder strewn  
 Therein, the clever and the wise.

Now note what wondrous friendship glows  
 Betwixt the flagon and the glass:  
 Lip pressed to lip their life they pass,  
 And each to each the life-blood flows.

Take it, my heart, all worldly ease  
 And longed-for joy is thine to hold;  
 Thy garden of delight untold,  
 Fringed round with meadows and green trees;

And take it, too, that one brief night  
 Like dew thou sittest on the mead,  
 But on the morrow, with all speed,  
 Shalt rise, and vanish out of sight.



'Tis safest in the soul's domain  
 To walk with prudence, warily;  
 Upon the world's affairs to be  
 Least vocal is the surest gain.

As long as eyes are in thy head,  
 As long as thou hast tongue and ear,  
 'Tis wisest, naught to see and hear,  
 To suffer nothing to be said.

'Tis better to be drinking all  
 The day, and pretty maids to 'love,  
 Than to affect the fashion of  
 Ascetics hypocritical.

If every drunkard is to be  
 In Hell, irrevocably so,  
 Then who, of all that live below,  
 The face of Paradise shall see?

Now, while Youth's fleeting days are thine,  
 This is the wiser, better way:  
 To laugh with Loveliness all day,  
 And to be quaffing crimson wine.

This world is going down to death,  
 A wilderness, a howling waste;  
 Then seize the wine with urgent haste;  
 Be drunk, so long as thou hast breath.

How long wilt thou be prisoner  
 To every scent and every hue,  
 And shalt thou evermore pursue  
 All things soever foul and fair ?

Though thou the Well of Zemzem art,  
 Or Life's own Fountain, in the end  
 Thy flow must fail, and thou descend  
 To lie forever in Earth's heart.

A hundred faiths, a hundred hearts  
 Than one fair bowl are not more worth,  
 And China's empire and good earth  
 Less riches than red wine imparts.

And is there any bitter sweet  
 But ruby wine on earth to see,  
 For which a thousand lives would be  
 Scant credit in joy's balance-sheet ?

Each morning, when the tulip's face  
 Is sprinkled o'er with sparkling dew,  
 And violets the meadow through  
 Hang down their heads in modest grace ;

It doth the sweetest joy impart,  
 As I count true, to see the rose,  
 That passionate virgin, gather close  
 Her folds, to hide her throbbing heart.

Old Age, that all injustice wreaks,  
 Experienced in human hurts,  
 To quince-like pallor now converts  
 The faded cherries of my cheeks.

Life's corner-stones, the roof and walls  
 And gates of its proud edifice  
 Crash down; my tenement of bliss  
 In utter desolation falls.

Call not to mind thy yesterday,  
 The sun that is forever set;  
 To-morrow has not come as yet—  
 Make not lament, ere it's away.

Seek not joy's edifice to bind  
 On what is past, or is to be;  
 Take now thy utmost fill of glee,  
 And build not life upon the wind.

Since first I saw the light of day  
 I have not passed one sober hour;  
 Though it be the dread Night of Power,  
 I dribble still my drunken way.

My lip to the bowl's lip I lay  
 And lean my bosom on grief's breast;  
 About the flagon's neck is pressed  
 My loving hand, until the day.

If wine is no delight to thee,  
 Grudge not the drunkards their small joy,  
 Nor seek their pleasure to destroy  
 With carping talk and trickery.

Thou takest an unholy pride  
 Because pure wine thou dost eschew,  
 A hundred vices to pursue  
 That drink is innocence beside.

Drink wine, to make thee unaware  
 Of all the griefs that vex the mind,  
 And bring thy foeman, who designed  
 Thy utmost ruin, to despair.

For what's the profit to attain  
 In being sober, my poor friend,  
 Save with grim thoughts upon the end  
 To win thy heart unmeasured pain?

Best of all friends I ever had,  
 Give heed to this my counsel wise:  
 Think not on the unrooted skies,  
 Let not their swivelling make thee sad.

Best in contentment's quiet court  
 Choose thou thy corner, and there squat,  
 Regarding with amusement what  
 The heav'ns contrive in their poor sport.

O, I have wrapped the threadbare gown  
 Of abstinence about the cask;  
 The wineshop's dust is all I ask  
 To cleanse me, ere I kneel me down.

For it may be that when I pray  
 So shriven, in the tavern's dust  
 I shall recover, as I trust,  
 The life I gambled there away.

The secrets of the world, as we  
 Succinctly on our tablets write,  
 Are not expedient to recite:  
 A plague to heart and head they be.

Since there is none, as I can find,  
 Of those brave wizards of to-day  
 Worthy to hear, I cannot say  
 The wondrous thoughts I have in mind.

Now I will suffer thee to share  
 The secrets hidden in my heart:  
 Two words are ample to impart  
 The brief intelligence I bare.

When I shall die, as die I must,  
 Thy love I'll carry to the clay,  
 To lift my head one happy day,  
 Thee still adoring, from the dust.

Let greed be ever less in thee,  
 And more content possess thee still;  
 Break every bond of good and ill  
 Devised for thee by Destiny.

Take wine into thy hand, and tie  
 The loved one's tress about thy heart;  
 Too soon these brittle chains shall part  
 And in these days all joy shall die.

Though all the world be decked out fair  
 And offered to thy wondering eyes,  
 Go not about it; for the wise  
 And prudent do not wander there.

Many and many such as thou  
 Their exit and their entrance make;  
 Seize thou thy portion, ere death take  
 Thy whole, and seize it to thee now.

Since my affair and thy affair  
 Shall scarce proceed to our design,  
 What shall befall my toil and thine,  
 And whither waste our thoughtful care?

We sit forever sick at heart  
 And wondrous sorrowful within,  
 That all too late we entered in  
 And all too early must depart.

Thank God, a soft day : gentle now  
 The air, not torrid, neither chill :  
 The April showers sweetly swill  
 The dust from the pale rose's brow.

The nightingale in a divine  
 Rapture makes golden melody  
 To serenade the rose, and me :  
 "'Tis thy strict duty, to drink wine !"

Who is, that ever came to birth  
 And did not sin in all his days :  
 And if he sinned not, what strange ways  
 Found he to waste his life on earth :

I own the evil I am at ;  
 And Thou requitest me with ill ;  
 So tell me, if it be Thy will—  
 How differest Thou from me in that :

Lord, I am weary unto death  
 Of this mean being that is mine :  
 The fetters that my heart confine,  
 My empty hands, my narrow breath.

Yet Thou hast power to transmute  
 The naughted unto entity :  
 O raise me to the sanctuary  
 Of Thine own Being Absolute.

Thou, Lord, hast fashioned me like this,  
 For Thou my sole Creator art:  
 To yield to music all my heart,  
 And find in wine immortal bliss.

Since at the birthday of the world  
 Thou madest me upon this wise,  
 How seems it justice in Thine eyes  
 To Hell Thy creature to have hurled?

Rise up, my heart; no more consume  
 The sorrow of this fleeting earth;  
 Surrender thee to instant mirth,  
 And let no moment pass in gloom.

For if Fate's temper had possessed  
 Of faithfulness the scantest sum,  
 The turn of life had never come  
 To thee, deserting those the rest.

What great advantage is to gain  
 Consuming grief unceasingly?  
 Many a thousand such as we  
 Heaven has sown, to reap again.

Fill high the bowl, and charge my glass,  
 And I will drink with the dear friend  
 In haste, ere joy is at an end  
 And all things past that have to pass.



Thou, Lord, art generous; and 'tis right  
 The generous should act generously;  
 Why then exclude poor sinful me  
 From Iram's garden of delight?

It is no generous thing to do,  
 To pardon me if I obey;  
 But if Thou wastest all away  
 When I rebel, that's bounty true.

Since never turned the Wheel of Fate  
 To suit the wishes of the wise,  
 As thou desirest, count the skies  
 At seven, or to tot up eight.

Since joy is small, and life is scant,  
 And all desires in death must end,  
 What care, if wolf in desert rend  
 Thy flesh, or gnaw, in grave, the ant?

Saki, my heart is more worn out  
 Than all the crumbling and the dead,  
 Who, lying in their earthy bed,  
 Have more repose than I without.

And though my tears of blood run down  
 And wash my raiment all in pain,  
 Mine eyes, that too long sorrows stain,  
 Are not so dabbled as my gown.

If thou wouldst find a base secure  
 Whereon life's fabric may repose,  
 A heart this little while from woes  
 Released, and plunged in pleasure pure:

Let not an idle moment slip  
 And thou not busy with the wine,  
 That instantly life's joy be thine  
 Sucked in and savoured on thy lip.

## 221

Rank poison is the world's distress,  
 And the sole antidote is wine;  
 So, while the antidote is thine,  
 Thou needest dread the poison less.

With shining lads in boyhood's bloom  
 Drink wine, where shining roses glow,  
 Now, ere thy days to ashes go  
 And roses blossom from thy tomb.

## 222

Be not neglectful of thy dues;  
 Respect religion's ritual;  
 What bread thou hast, keep it not all  
 Nor to dire need a crust refuse.

Thy fellows' goods do not design  
 To plunder, nor their blood to shed:  
 So thou 'lt to Heaven when thou art dead—  
 Now that is settled, bring me wine!

There is no night, but vexing fears  
 Perplex my mind, by doubts oppressed;  
 No night, but my distracted breast  
 Gleams with the necklace of my tears.

And this is plain geometry:  
 The head, that is an upturned cup,  
 No flood of wine can fill right up  
 And drown its dregs of misery.

Whatever Thou addressest me  
 Is said in anger measureless:  
 The charges of unfaithfulness,  
 The taunts of infidelity.

All this Thou say'st, I freely own,  
 Is true, and richly merited;  
 Yet justice grants, when all is said,  
 The cap fits Thee, not me alone!

The spirit, that is wholly free  
 Of all pollution with vile dust,  
 Came down thy guest, in perfect trust,  
 From its far world of purity.

Bestir then, as befits the host,  
 And pour it wine, the dawn's delight,  
 Ere it shall bid thee a good night  
 And go, and thou give up the ghost.

The clouds look down, this April shine,  
 And weep anew upon the grass;  
 O suffer not sweet life to pass  
 Without the crimson bloom of wine.

And this soft grass is ours to-day  
 To view with happy, hasty mirth:  
 And who shall press in later birth  
 The grasses springing from our clay?

Why yieldest thou to dumpy care,  
 My friend, for what must surely be,  
 That fluttering, chill anxiety,  
 And soul-destroying, vain despair?

Live clear of head and light of heart,  
 And let the world go by in glee;  
 The plan was not devised by thee,  
 And went without thee from the start.

If yonder Heaven had been mine,  
 Not God's, to hold at my desire,  
 I would have rooted up entire  
 And utterly its old design.

I would have then devised anew  
 A Heaven after such a plan  
 That easily the heart of man  
 Might reach its aim, and he his due.

Wise elder of the reverend brow,  
 Awake, and with the dawn arise,  
 And mark with grave, attentive eyes  
 Yon lad, a-winnowing ashes now.

Give prudent counsel to the lad:  
 "Sift gently, gently in the breeze  
 The flashing glances of Parwíz,  
 The brilliant brain of Kaikobád."

My whim, for ever and a day,  
 Is to be drinking the pure wine;  
 To hear the melody divine  
 When gentle flute and rebeck play.

If of my dust, when life is o'er,  
 Men make a pitcher for their want,  
 O may it be a boundless font  
 Of sweetest wine for evermore.

Since Reason in the days we live  
 Wins little profit, as I see,  
 And folly and frivolity  
 Alone Time's benefits receive:

Bring me the sovereign remedy  
 Prescribed for banishing the wit,  
 And haply Fate, perceiving it,  
 Will look on us more lovingly.

“Lo, I am Joseph”, laughed the rose,  
 “My mead, the Egypt’s realm I hold:  
 My mouth is full of shining gold,  
 And all with precious rubies glows.”

“If thou art Joseph, rose”, I said,  
 “Show me some sign, to know thee by”:  
 “Hereafter”, was the bloom’s reply,  
 “Thou ’lt see my garment all a shred.”

We, wine, and the beloved consent  
 To gladness in this desert place,  
 Freed from all hope of heavenly grace  
 And every fear of chastisement.

We pledge to wine, sole heart’s desire,  
 Spirit and body, robe and cup;  
 With Earth and Air no more bound up,  
 Released from Water and from Fire.

The essence of all things that seem  
 Illusion is and fantasy;  
 Poor scholars they, who cannot see  
 That unsubstantial is their dream.

Sit thou awhile, and with good cheer  
 Be drinking good, substantial wine:  
 Heed not these flickering forms that shine  
 Their moment ere they disappear.

Thine is the Hand that fashioned us  
 And graved our being to Thy skill;  
 And in our mould Thou castest still  
 A hundred shapes right marvellous.

I think it is not possible  
 That I a better man should be,  
 Since on this wise Thou pouredst me  
 From Thy eternal crucible.

A goodly draught of ancient wine  
 Is fairer than a kingdom new:  
 No other end but this pursue,  
 And let no other path be thine.

The bowl excels a hundredfold  
 Ferídún's empire and renown,  
 The brick that doth the wine-vat crown  
 Kaikhusrau's diadem of gold.

Knowest thou why at white of morn  
 The dawn-arising cock doth cry  
 Each moment, as in bed we lie,  
 His anthem mournful and forlorn?

This is the message he would bear:  
 "I have descried in morning's glass  
 Another night of life doth pass,  
 And thou unwise and unaware."

With those brave stupid, two or three,  
 Who in their folly are so wise  
 They know, what we scarce realise,  
 They only know the world, not we:

Thou 'st better be an ass as well;  
 For they 're so sunk in assishness  
 That they call every man, unless  
 He be an ass, an infidel.

And yonder pitcher in its day  
 A hapless lover was, like me,  
 The bonds of his captivity  
 The ringlets of some beauty gay.

And this same handle thou dost see  
 Now with my hand I fondly pres  
 Was once a hand, that did caress  
 A loved one's throat as tenderly.

A perfume lovely as the rose  
 Is all the yearning of my soul;  
 The pungent wine, the brimming bowl—  
 I long to lay my hand on those.

And of each part, as luck may fall,  
 My portion I design to take,  
 Before those scattered parts shall make  
 Their grand reunion with the All.



Khayyám, I bid thee happy be  
 If thou art drunk with wine a space,  
 And if, in some secluded place,  
 A lovely idol sits with thee.

The end of all things, we are taught,  
 Is nothing and nonentity;  
 Whilst thou art something, happy be,  
 Imagining when thou art naught.

So far as it is given thee,  
 Weigh not the world's great thrust of care;  
 Set not upon thy heart to bear  
 The load that was, or is to be.

This round of days thou shalt remain  
 Live happily, and drink good wine;  
 For though a treasure-house be thine,  
 Thou canst not take with thee one grain.

Take thou the portion given thee  
 As the revolving days go by;  
 The goblet grasp, and blithely lie  
 Before the board of jollity.

God needeth not that we obey,  
 And should not care if we rebel:  
 All people who on earth do dwell  
 Best please their fancy, while they may.

As I was slumbering one day  
 A wise man passed, and spake to me:  
 "None ever culled the rose of glee  
 Who all his life a-sleeping lay.

"Why art thou prone upon a thing  
 That is twin-brother unto Death?  
 Drink wine, as long as thou hast breath:  
 Long lives thou shalt be slumbering."

Why troublest thou forever, friend,  
 If all, or none, thou shalt possess,  
 Or if this life in happiness  
 Or sorrow thou art doomed to spend?

With goodly wine the beaker crown;  
 For naught I know, and gravely doubt  
 If thou art destined to puff out  
 This very breath thou drawest down.

Open for me a door, O Lord,  
 Whence I may win my daily bread,  
 Nor scrape for favours to be fed  
 With remnants from the miser's board.

Preserve me, Lord, that I may so  
 Be flown with wine my whole life through  
 That if my head, as it may do,  
 Thereafter ache, I shall not know.

Wherever crimson tulips thrust  
 Their cups, and roses glow in mirth,  
 There lies, beneath a press of earth,  
 A blushing princess, turned to dust.

And wheresoever from the clay  
 The violet lifts her lovely head,  
 There sleeps forever, cold and dead,  
 Beauty that burned its life away.

At the first blue and fitful shine  
 Of dawn uprising in the skies  
 Seize to thy hand, if thou art wise,  
 A glowing bowl of purest wine.

Since it is famous among men  
 That wine, like truth, is bitter stuff,  
 Well, surely that is proof enough—  
 Wine must be right and proper, then.

'Tis wrong to plant the barren tree  
 Of dark dejection in the heart:  
 Read on, if thou hast learned the art,  
 The gospel of hilarity.

There's wine to drink, and every gay  
 Whim of the heart to gratify:  
 'Tis clear, how little thou and I  
 Within this world may look to stay.

Be watchful, for the stream of days  
 Stirs up much trouble, soon or late;  
 Sit not secure—the sword of Fate  
 Is sharp, and the unwary slays.

If Fortune drops into thy throat  
 A lozenge, seem it oh so good,  
 Suck it not down: 'tis poisoned food  
 And, swallowed, knows no antidote.

Since all the profit men obtain  
 Within the Convent of Two Doors  
 The heart's blood is, that grief outpours,  
 The soul, for yielding up again:

Happy alone is he, whose doom  
 Was never to be seen on Earth;  
 He only knows true peace and mirth  
 Who never left his mother's womb.

Dear Lord, Thy great compassion show  
 Upon my heart, grief's prisoner;  
 Upon my bosom, that doth bear  
 So huge, intolerable woe.

Forgive my faltering steps, if they  
 Stray where the inviting tavern stands;  
 Have mercy on my trembling hands,  
 And take my goblet not away.



## NOTES





## NOTES

The numbers prefixed to these notes correspond with the numbers of the poems.

2. "Speculation's Steed": Omar blasphemously uses the name of Burak, the winged horse on which the Prophet Muhammad is said to have made his miraculous night-journey to heaven.

4. Omar parodies the Sufi mystical doctrine that all religions are one.

9. This learned joke incorporates a succession of technical terms drawn from Logic.

11. Omar contrasts his controllable drunkenness with the wild enthusiasms of the Sufis' mystical intoxication.

15. Medicine inspires this and other poems upon the favourite theme that wine is the antidote to the world's poisonous cares.

18. Three months are held to be sacred in Islam: Shaaban, Rajab, and Ramadan. Of these Ramadan is the most sacred, being the month of strict fasting. Nevertheless, Omar, after pretending to agree with those purists who boast of observing Rajab and Shaaban strictly, utters the blasphemy that Ramadan is dedicated to his drinking.

19. The last line is a good deal more rude in the Persian than in my translation.

21. Omar uses the old philosophers' argument that our best friends are our worst enemies, because when they die they cause us so great sorrow.

22. A metaphysical joke.

24. Satan is said in the Koran to have been commanded by God to bow down and worship Adam, but refused and was therefore expelled from God's Presence. Koran II. 32.

28. Persians cover their wine-vats with bricks. Jamshid was one of the greatest kings of ancient Persia. "Mary's wondrous bread" is a reference to Koran XIX. 25, where Mary is said to have been miraculously fed during the time she was bearing Jesus.

## *Omar Khayyám*

30. The Magian (or Zoroastrian), not being a Moslem, was free to make and sell wine, if he could get away with it; and so the Magian boy is frequently mentioned in Persian poetry as the saki or wine-bearer.

33. "That half of life" is the life after death.

34. "Poor hack"; the piebald world, alternately black and white in dawn and dusk.

36. A fine image drawn from the oriental shadow-play: the showman, who as in Punch and Judy speaks all the parts, casts the shadows of his puppets upon the drawn curtain, then, when the curtain is withdrawn, the stage is seen to be desolate.

39. The "fount of immortality" is a river at the farthest ends of the earth, which Alexander is said to have sought, accompanied by his mysterious guide, after his conquest of India.

48. A parody of the Gnostic doctrine, taken into Islam, that Man is the final end of creation.

52. A fine medical joke.

53. A parody of the exaggerated descriptions of grief and flooding tears popular with the Arab and Persian poets.

58. The bathos of the reference to the fly is thoroughly characteristic of Persian poetic taste.

61. Another medical jest.

62. To mention the four Elements in one verse was regarded as a great elegance in Persian poetry: Omar parodies the fashion.

63. A mathematical joke. In Islam, divorce is effected by pronouncing the formula "I divorce thee" thrice.

66. The allusions in this poem have been fully explained in the introduction.

70. Káús and Kobád were ancient kings of Persia, and Tús a famous city.

76. The four Elements again.

78. And the medical joke again.

79. A comic parody of the fashionable love-poetry.

83. An ingenious exercise in "principal parts of the verb".

88. Perhaps Omar's most audacious blasphemy.



## Notes

97. This poem is built up around a pun on the word *Maisara*, which occurs in Koran II. 280 with the meaning "prosperity", but which is translatable, if construed as Persian, "wine is good". A further pun on the meaning of the word as "left" is also involved.

101. Omar pictures the flask of red wine upon his crown as like the comb of a cock, the comb of the cock as like a saw, and himself as ready to be slaughtered if need be for the sake of wine. The verse contains a pun on the two meanings of the word *farq*, "difference" and "crown."

105. Some of the "pots" were vocal, being still living human pots; the silent pots were of course made from the dust of once vocal human "pots".

106. Khan and Kay are royal titles.

108. The grape is said to be "newly wed" when it has been freshly crushed into wine.

109. Omar parodies his own melancholy.

118. A half-serious parody of the exaggerated style of amorous poetry.

121. Rustam was a famous hero of old Persia; his legend is familiar to English readers from Matthew Arnold's exquisite *Sohrab and Rustum*. Hâtim was an ancient Arab of legendary generosity.

124. The old cosmogonists fancied that the earth rested upon a great fish.

134. The epithet "free" (*azad*) is commonly attached to the lily and the cedar in Persian poetry. Omar seeks to give the reason in a humorous etymology.

142. This poem may very well have been invented to illustrate a lecture upon the circumference of a circle.

146. Mahmud of Ghazna, famous for his conquest of northern India, was passionately attached to a slave-boy named Ayaz; their romance was celebrated in Persian poetry.

149. An ironical comment upon the rival theories whether the world is eternal, or created in time.

159. Theology and arithmetic combine to give point to this little jest: no mathematician like Omar would make the mistake of confusing monotheism with dualism.

## *Omar Khayyám*

160. Omar jests at the physical descriptions of the joys of Paradise in which the Koran abounds.

176. Once again the four Elements.

183. Men look eagerly for the new moon which marks the end of Ramadan and its austerities.

187. For "Alexander's godly guide", see the note on 39.

190. Omar argues against the astrologists with their talk of planetary influences.

196. Zemzem is the holy well of Mecca.

210. The "Night of Power" is the 27th of Ramadan, upon which angels roam freely about the world; the Koran is said to have been revealed on this night. It is set aside by all good believers for exceptional pieties.

205. When water is not available, it is permitted to make the ritual ablutions in sand. Water is hardly to be found in a tavern; therefore the sand on the floor will prove a blameless substitute for the penitent drunkard looking for the return of his wasted life.

213. This poem is said to have been spoken by Omar on his death-bed.

217. Iram was a legendary city of ancient Arabia reputed to have been most beautiful, adorned with jewels and wonderful gardens. Its name then became metaphorical for Paradise.

218. The old cosmogonists were at variance whether there were seven or eight "layers" of Heaven: here is Omar's comment on the controversy.

219. More parody of the exaggerated parlance of the mystics, with their references to tears of blood, and skirts dabbled all in the blood shed from their eyes upon the ground.

222. A parody of some old moralist's sermonizing.

229. Parwíz and Kaikobád were ancient kings of Persia.

232. Potiphar's wife rent Joseph's shirt from behind, a fact which proved Joseph's innocence when he was denounced to Potiphar: see Koran XII. 25-29.

233. Once more the four Elements.

234. Again Omar thinks of life as a shadow-play.

236. Ferídún and Kaikhusrau were also kings of old Persia.

## Notes

244. An Arabic proverb makes Sleep the brother of Death.

247. In the original, the violet is said to spring from the mole upon the cheek of a lovely maiden. As the mole is black, and is sometimes said to be the ashes of a lover's heart burnt out by passion, I have felt justified in changing the image.

248. An Arabic proverb says that Truth is bitter. Omar makes a pretty little syllogism to prove the virtue of drinking.

251. The world is said to be a convent of two doors—one for entering, and the other for leaving.

252. The copyist has chosen a fine parody of a penitent's prayer to end his selection.



## PARALLELS FROM FITZGERALD



## PARALLELS FROM FITZGERALD

Below are given those stanzas from FitzGerald's paraphrase of which the originals occur in the Cambridge manuscript of Omar Khayyám. The first number in each case refers to the Cambridge manuscript, and the second (in roman figures) to FitzGerald's fourth edition, unless otherwise specified.

### 12 : XCVI

Yet Ah, that Spring should vanish with the Rose!  
That Youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!  
The Nightingale that in the branches sang,  
Ah whence, and whither flown again, who knows!

### 15 : IX

Each Morn a thousand Roses brings, you say;  
Yes, but where leaves the Rose of Yesterday?  
And this first Summer month that brings the Rose  
Shall take Jamshýd and Kaikobád away.

### 29 : XXXVIII

And has not such a Story from of Old  
Down Man's successive generations roll'd  
Of such a clod of saturated Earth  
Cast by the Maker into Human mould?

### 34 : XVII

Think, in this batter'd Caravanserai  
Whose Portals are alternate Night and Day,  
How Sultán after Sultán with his Pomp  
Abode his destined Hour, and went his way.

### 36 : XXXII

There was the Door to which I found no Key;  
There was the Veil through which I might not see:  
Some little talk awhile of ME and THEE  
There was—and then no more of THEE and ME.

## Omar Khayyám

38 : XCVII

Would but the Desert of the Fountain yield  
One glimpse—if dimly, yet indeed, reveal'd,  
    To which the fainting Traveller might spring,  
As springs the trampled herbage of the field!

40 : LXX

The Ball no question makes of Ayes and Noes,  
But Here or There as strikes the Player goes:  
    And He that toss'd you down into the Field,  
*He* knows about it all—HE knows—HE knows!

51 : XXXVII<sup>1</sup>

Ah, fill the Cup—what boots it to repeat  
How Time is slipping underneath our Feet:  
    Unborn TO-MORROW, and dead YESTERDAY,  
Why fret about them if TO-DAY be sweet!

55 : LXV

The Revelations of Devout and Learn'd  
Who rose before us, and as Prophets burn'd,  
    Are all but Stories, which, awoke from Sleep  
They told their comrades, and to Sleep return'd.

60 : XXI

Ah, my Belovéd, fill the Cup that clears  
TO-DAY of past Regrets and Future Fears:  
    *To-morrow!*—Why, To-morrow I may be  
Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n thousand Years.

63 : LV

You know, my Friends, with what a brave Carouse  
I made a Second Marriage in my house;  
    Divorced old barren Reason from my Bed,  
And took the Daughter of the Vine to Spouse.

64 : XLVIII

A Moment's Halt—a momentary taste  
Of BEING from the Well amid the Waste—  
    And Lo!—the phantom Caravan has reach'd  
The NOTHING it set out from—Oh, make haste!



## *Parallels from Fitzgerald*

66 : I

Wake! For the Sun, who scatter'd into flight  
The Stars before him from the Field of Night,  
Drives Night along with them from Heav'n and strikes  
The Sultán's Turret with a Shaft of Light.

73 : LXIV

Strange, is it not? that of the myriads who  
Before us pass'd the door of Darkness through,  
Not one returns to tell us of the Road,  
Which to discover we must travel too.

80 : XI

With me along the strip of Herbage strown  
That just divides the desert from the sown,  
Where name of Slave and Sultán is forgot—  
And Peace to Mahmúd on his golden Throne!

82 : XCI

Ah, with the Grape my fading Life provide,  
And wash the Body whence the Life has died,  
And lay me, shrouded in the living Leaf,  
By some not unfrequented Garden-side.

86 : CI

And when like her, oh Sáki, you shall pass  
Among the Guests Star-scatter'd on the Grass,  
And in your joyous errand reach the spot  
Where I made One—turn down an empty Glass!

87 : LXXVII

And this I know: whether the one True Light  
Kindle to Love, or Wrath-consume me quite,  
One Flash of it within the Tavern caught  
Better than in the Temple lost outright.

105 : LXXXII-III-VII

As under cover of departing Day  
Slunk hunger-stricken Ramazán away,  
Once more within the Potter's house alone  
I stood, surrounded by the Shapes of Clay

[145]

## *Omar Khayyám*

Shapes of all Sorts and Sizes, great and small,  
They stood along the floor and by the wall;  
And some loquacious Vessels were; and some  
Listen'd perhaps, but never talk'd at all.

Whereat some one of the loquacious Lot—  
I think a Súfi pipkin—waxing hot—  
“All this of Pot and Potter—Tell me then,  
Who is the Potter, pray, and who the Pot?”

### 107 : LVIII

And lately, by the Tavern Door agape,  
Came shining through the Dusk an Angel Shape  
Bearing a Vessel on his Shoulder; and  
He bid me taste of it; and 'twas—the Grape!

### 114 : LVI

For “IS” and “IS-NOT” though with Rule and Line  
And “UP-AND-DOWN” by Logic I define,  
Of all that one should care to fathom, I  
Was never deep in anything but—Wine.

### 115 : LXXXIV

Said one among them—“Surely not in vain  
My substance of the common Earth was ta'en  
And to this Figure moulded, to be broke,  
Or trampled back to shapeless Earth again.”

### 116 : XV

And those who husbanded the Golden grain,  
And those who flung it to the winds like Rain,  
Alike to no such aureate Earth are turn'd  
As, buried once, Men want dug up again.

### 118 : LXVII

Heav'n but the Vision of fulfill'd Desire,  
And Hell the Shadow from a Soul on fire,  
Cast on the Darkness into which Ourselves,  
So late emerged from, shall so soon expire.

## *Parallels from Fitzgerald*

121 : X

Well, let it take them! What have we to do  
With Kaikobád the Great, or Kaikhosrú?  
Let Zál and Rustum bluster as they will,  
Or Hátim call to Supper—heed not you.

125 : XX

And this reviving Herb whose tender Green  
Fledges the River-Lip on which we lean—  
Ah, lean upon it lightly! for who knows  
From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen!

127 : XXXV

Then to the lip of this poor earthen Urn  
I lean'd, the Secret of my life to learn:  
And Lip to Lip it murmur'd—"While you live,  
Drink!—for, once dead, you never shall return."

135 : KXXXV

Then said a Second—"Ne'er a peevish Boy  
Would break the Bowl from which he drank in joy;  
And He that with his hand the Vessel made  
Will surely not in after Wrath destroy."

136 : VIII

Whether at Naishápúr or Babylon,  
Whether the Cup with sweet or bitter run,  
The Wine of Life keeps oozing drop by drop,  
The Leaves of Life keep falling one by one.

138 : IX

See 15

147 : XIII

Some for the Glories of This World; and some  
Sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to come;  
Ah, take the Cash, and let the Credit go,  
Nor heed the rumble of a distant Drum!

## *Omar Khayyám*

159 : Preface

If I myself upon a Looser Creed  
Have loosely strung the Jewel of Good deed,  
Let this one thing for my Atonement plead:  
That One for Two I never did mis-read.

161 : XII

A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,  
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou  
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—  
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow !

165 : LXV<sup>a</sup>

If but the Vine and Love-abjuring Band  
Are in the Prophet's Paradise to stand,  
Alack, I doubt the Prophet's Paradise  
Were empty as the hollow of one's Hand.

170 : LXXXIX

"Well," murmured one. "Let whoso make or buy,  
My Clay with long Oblivion is gone dry:  
But fill me with the old familiar Juice,  
Methinks I might recover by and by."

171 : XCI

See 82

172 : LXII

I must abjure the Balm of Life, I must,  
Scared by some After-reckoning ta'en on trust,  
Or lured with Hope of some Diviner Drink,  
To fill the Cup—when crumbled into Dust !

173 : LXIX

But helpless Pieces of the Game He plays  
Upon this Chequer-board of Nights and Days;  
Hither and thither moves, and checks, and slays,  
And one by one back in the Closet lays.

## *Parallels from Fitzgerald*

188 : LXXXVIII

"Why," said another, "Some there are who tell  
Of one who threatens he will toss to Hell  
The luckless Pots he marr'd in making—Pish!  
He's a Good Fellow, and 't will all be well."

190-I : LXXII

And that inverted Bowl they call the Sky,  
Whereunder crawling coop'd we live and die,  
Lift not your hands to *It* for help—for it  
As impotently moves as you or I.

192 : XVI

The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon  
Turns Ashes—or it prospers; and anon,  
Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face,  
Lighting a little hour or two—is gone.

194 : LXV<sup>2</sup>

See 165

204 : XLV<sup>1</sup>

But leave the Wise to wrangle, and with me  
The Quarrel of the Universe let be:  
And, in some corner of the Hubbub coucht,  
Make Game of that which makes as much of Thee.

208 : XLI

Perplext no more with Human or Divine,  
To-morrow's tangle to the winds resign,  
And lose your fingers in the tresses of  
The Cypress-slender Minister of Wine.

211 : VI

And David's lips are lockt; but in divine  
High-piping Pehlevi, with "Wine! Wine! Wine!  
Red Wine!"—the Nightingale cries to the Rose  
That sallow cheek of hers to incarnadine.

## Omar Khayyám

215 : XXIII

And we, that now make merry in the Room  
They left, and Summer dresses in new bloom,  
Ourselves must we beneath the Couch of Earth  
Descend—ourselves to make a Couch—for whom?

226 : XXIII

See 215

228 : XCIX

Ah Love! could you and I with Him conspire  
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,  
Would not we shatter it to bits—and then  
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire!

239 : XXXVI

I think the Vessel, that with fugitive  
Articulation answer'd, once did live,  
And drink; and Ah! the passive Lip I kiss'd,  
How many Kisses might it take—and give!

241 : XLII

And if the Wine you drink, the Lip you press,  
End in what All begins and ends in—Yes;  
Think then you are TO-DAY what YESTERDAY  
You were—TO-MORROW you shall not be less.

245 : XIV<sup>a</sup>

Were it not Folly, Spider-like to spin  
The Thread of present Life away to win—  
What? for ourselves, who know not if we shall  
Breathe out the very Breath we now breathe in!

247 : XIX

I sometimes think that never blows so red  
The Rose as where some buried Caesar bled;  
That every Hyacinth the Garden wears  
Dropt in her Lap from some once lovely Head.

## TABLE OF MANUSCRIPTS AND EDITIONS

The following table gives the order of the quatrains in the Cambridge manuscript, with the corresponding numbers in the principal manuscripts and editions. The following abbreviations have been used:

- C = Cambridge MS. dated 604 (1207).  
 ACB = Chester Beatty MS. dated 658 (1259-60).  
 B = Bodleian MS. dated 865 (1460-1).  
 Chr = Edition of A. Christensen. Copenhagen, 1927.  
 F = Edition of M. A. Furughi. Teheran, 1942.  
 G = Anthology discovered by H. E. Qasim Ghani. 14th cent.  
 N = Edition of J. B. Nicolas. Paris, 1867.  
 Q = Anthology discovered by M. Qazvini dated 741 (1341).  
 R = Edition of F. Rosen. Berlin, 1925.  
 R<sup>1</sup> = Appendix I of preceding: anthology dated 930 (1523-4).  
 Rem = Anthology discovered by C. Rempis dated 731 (1331).  
 S = Anthology discovered by S. Nafisi. Circa 750 (1349).  
 W = Edition (2nd) of E. H. Whinfield. London, 1901.  
 Ftz = Paraphrase by E. FitzGerald (4th edition unless otherwise noted).

C	ACB	B	Chr	F	G	N	Q	R <sup>1</sup>	R	Rem	S	W	Ftz
1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	21	—	—	226	—
2	—	—	—	—	—	120	—	—	22	—	—	147	—
3	5	—	—	56	—	—	—	85	—	—	1	—	—
4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	60	—	—	—	—	—
5	—	—	—	—	—	268	—	199	—	—	—	311	—
6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	18	—	—	—	—
7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	202	53	—	—	—	—
8	—	—	—	5	—	13	—	6	—	—	—	12	—
9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	319	—	—	—	494	—

# Omar Khayyám

C	ACB	B	Chr	F	G	N	Q	R	R <sup>1</sup>	Rem	S	W	Ftz
10	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	106	—	—	—	—	—
11	108	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	11	—	—	—	—
12	109	—	—	63	—	142	—	—	28	—	—	155	96
13	110	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
14	111	126	—	—	—	—	—	249	—	—	—	386	—
15	112	—	121	158	—	402	—	286	—	—	—	444	9
16	113	—	—	86	—	—	—	136	—	—	—	—	—
17	114	—	—	—	—	119	—	99	—	—	—	—	—
18	—	—	25	—	—	65	—	61	—	—	—	68	—
19	3	142	—	—	—	—	—	294	—	—	—	492	—
20	6	137	—	—	—	367	—	273	—	—	—	412	—
21	—	8	—	—	—	—	—	12	—	—	—	—	—
22	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	268	—	—	—	424	—
23	7	—	—	62	—	125	—	94	—	—	—	152	—
24	8	—	109	—	—	—	—	200	—	—	—	313	—
25	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7	—	—	—	—
26	10	51	94	60	—	157	—	125	—	26	—	176	—
27	11	—	—	—	—	310	—	237	—	—	—	343	—
28	12	—	101	105	—	215	—	160	—	—	—	253	—
29	13	—	—	—	—	—	—	300	—	—	—	493	38
30	14	—	—	—	—	297	—	226	—	—	—	334	—
31	15	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
32	16	—	—	37	—	—	—	—	12	—	—	—	—
33	18	59	—	—	—	—	—	90	—	—	—	213	—
34	17	—	—	17	—	67	—	21	—	—	—	70	17
35	19	130	114	150	—	351	—	259	—	—	—	393	—
36	—	—	110	—	—	—	—	240	—	—	—	389	32
37	20	—	—	—	—	—	—	55	—	—	—	—	—
38	21	—	—	163	—	400	—	—	62	—	—	442	97
39	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
40	22	—	—	—	—	—	—	261	—	—	—	401	50
41	23	—	—	—	—	401	—	287	—	—	—	443	—
42	24	—	—	—	—	238	—	180	—	—	—	278	—



# Table of Manuscripts and Editions

C	ACB	B	Chr	F	G	N	Q	R	R <sup>1</sup>	Rem	S	W	Ftz
43	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	217	—	—	—	—	—
44	25	90	69	108	—	44	—	162	—	—	—	—	—
45	26	—	—	28	—	—	—	35	—	—	—	—	—
46	—	128	71	—	—	344	—	253	—	—	—	382	—
47	—	97	56	—	—	228	—	174	39	—	—	267	—
48	—	—	—	—	—	304	—	233	—	—	—	340	—
49	27	—	—	109	—	—	—	164	41	—	—	—	—
50	—	—	—	120	—	257	—	195	—	—	—	298	—
51	28	17	23	19	—	—	—	25	—	—	—	112	37 <sup>1</sup>
52	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	24	—	—	—	—
53	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	16	—	—	—	—
54	29	—	—	—	—	—	—	205	—	—	—	357	—
55	30	—	—	54	—	464	—	86	—	—	—	209	65
56	31	—	95	57	—	107	—	89	—	—	—	137	—
57	32	12	62	10	—	26	—	14	—	—	—	30	—
58	—	—	—	97	—	—	7	—	—	—	—	—	—
59	—	—	—	—	—	62	—	71	—	—	—	65	—
60	33	—	26	121	—	269	—	204	60	—	—	312	21
61	—	122	113	—	—	322	—	239	—	—	—	365	—
62	34	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
63	35	—	75	—	—	181	—	95	—	—	—	196	55
64	—	60	97	66	—	106	—	97	—	—	—	136	—
65	36	64	—	—	—	151	—	119	—	—	—	172	—
66	37	—	96	—	—	103	—	110	—	—	—	233	1
67	38	—	—	—	—	264	—	206	—	—	—	307	—
68	39	—	—	—	—	—	—	158	—	—	—	—	—
69	40	—	—	—	—	—	—	77	—	—	—	—	—
70	42	—	88	52	—	61	—	78	—	—	—	64	—
71	43	138	—	—	—	362	—	267	—	—	—	407	—
72	—	—	—	123	—	—	—	—	59	—	11	—	—
73	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	27	—	—	—	129	—
74	44	—	—	—	—	318	—	241	—	—	—	361	—
75	—	42	63	—	—	98	—	74	—	—	—	99	—

# Omar Khayyám

C	ACB	B	Chr	F	G	N	Q	R	R <sup>1</sup>	Rem	S	W	Ftz
76	172	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	57	—	—	354	—
77	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	15	—	—	—	—
78	45	—	—	—	—	280	—	198	—	—	—	—	—
79	46	—	—	—	—	150	—	117	—	—	—	171	—
80	47	40	55	43	—	92	—	67	—	—	—	94	11
81	—	—	106	—	—	—	—	228	—	—	—	—	—
82	48	—	98	—	—	109	—	139	—	—	—	139	91
83	49	—	—	—	—	—	—	101	25	—	—	—	—
84	50	135	—	154	—	370	—	270	—	—	—	414	—
85	51	—	31	118	—	252	8	192	—	—	—	—	—
86	52	84	—	—	—	192	—	148	—	—	—	205	101
87	1	2	52	—	—	222	—	172	40	—	—	262	77
88	53	141	—	—	—	—	—	285	—	—	—	388	—
89	54	—	—	—	—	—	—	88	—	—	—	229	—
90	2	—	—	—	—	275	—	208	—	—	—	318	—
91	55	—	—	85	—	—	—	135	—	—	—	—	—
92	56	—	100	—	—	170	—	134	—	—	—	186	—
93	57	—	—	166	4	354	6	263	—	29	—	396	—
94	58	146	36	164	—	404	—	299	—	—	—	446	—
95	59	—	—	—	—	391	—	290	—	—	—	433	—
96	60	—	—	104	—	198	—	156	—	—	—	242	—
97	61	—	87	—	—	—	—	41	—	—	—	—	—
98	62	—	—	—	—	434	—	313	—	—	—	469	—
99	63	—	102	110	—	214	—	165	—	—	—	—	—
100	64	39	—	46	—	—	—	65	—	—	—	105	—
101	65	57	—	—	—	—	—	82	—	—	—	236	—
102	66	—	—	—	—	234	—	178	—	—	—	273	—
103	67	—	—	—	—	301	—	—	51	—	—	337	—
104	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	8	—	—	—	—
105	68	—	—	117	—	243	—	187	—	28	—	283	82-3
106	—	—	—	—	—	279	—	231	55	—	—	—	—
107	69	—	105	—	—	244	—	188	—	—	—	284	58
108	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	166	—	—	—	—	—

# Table of Manuscripts and Editions

C	ACB	B	Chr	F	G	N	Q	R	R <sup>1</sup>	Rem	S	W	Ftz
109	70	29	61	32	—	44	—	42	—	—	—	47	—
110	71	—	—	—	—	439	—	291	—	—	—	472	—
111	72	—	111	—	—	345	—	254	—	—	—	383	—
112	73	—	—	—	—	339	—	252	—	—	—	378	—
113	74	—	—	157	—	—	—	283	—	—	—	—	—
114	75	120	—	—	—	300	—	234	—	—	—	336	56
115	—	—	—	115	—	—	—	185	—	—	—	290	84
116	76	68	7	80	—	156	—	124	—	—	—	175	16
117	77	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—
118	—	33	58	—	—	90	—	59	—	—	—	92	67
119	78	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
120	79	—	5	111	—	217	—	167	38	—	—	258	—
121	80	—	—	—	—	416	—	303	—	—	—	455	10
122	—	25	39	35	—	82	—	47	—	—	—	84	—
123	81	—	—	—	—	262	—	201	—	—	—	305	—
124	82	133	19	153	—	358	—	266	—	—	—	404	—
125	83	—	81	51	—	59	—	73	—	—	—	62	20
126	84	—	—	—	—	37	—	31	—	—	—	41	—
127	85	100	65	—	—	—	—	177	—	—	—	274	35
128	86	—	—	—	—	—	—	26	—	—	—	—	—
129	87	—	—	101	—	195	—	152	—	—	—	240	—
130	88	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
131	89	—	—	—	—	241	—	184	—	—	—	281	—
132	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	225	—	—	—	—	—
133	90	129	35	152	—	348	12	262	—	—	—	390	—
134	—	—	—	—	—	373	—	276	—	—	—	416	—
135	91	19	77	22	—	38	—	10	—	21	—	42	85
136	92	47	93	53	—	105	—	81	—	—	—	134	8
137	93	—	—	—	—	302	—	224	—	—	—	338	—
138	94	—	118	178	—	454	—	328	—	—	—	484	9
139	95	—	—	—	—	124	—	84	—	—	—	151	—
140	—	—	21	—	—	—	—	30	—	—	—	—	—
141	96	—	—	—	—	—	—	51	—	—	—	—	—

# Omar Khayyám

C	ACB	B	Chr	F	G	N	Q	R	R <sup>1</sup>	Rem	S	W	Ftz
142	97	—	80	34	—	—	11	50	—	—	—	—	—
143	98	—	51	24	—	—	5	56	—	—	—	—	—
144	99	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
145	100	—	—	—	—	419	—	305	—	—	—	458	—
146	101	—	—	—	—	219	—	169	—	—	—	259	—
147	102	34	—	41	—	—	—	62	—	—	—	108	13
148	103	—	—	—	—	138	—	111	—	—	—	162	—
149	104	112	9	127	—	284	4	219	56	25	6	324	—
150	105	—	—	—	—	—	—	296	—	—	—	495	—
151	106	—	—	—	—	282	—	209	—	—	—	322	—
152	107	—	—	—	—	355	—	264	—	—	—	397	—
153	—	95	—	—	—	216	—	170	—	—	—	257	—
154	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	14	—	—	—	—
155	—	30	—	—	—	51	—	45	—	—	—	54	—
156	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	17	—	—	—	—
157	123	—	—	—	—	233	—	—	46	—	—	272	—
158	—	—	—	—	—	375	—	278	—	—	—	418	—
159	169	1	104	—	—	229	—	176	45	—	—	268	Pref
160	124	—	4	87	—	168	—	137	—	—	—	185	—
161	125	—	28	175	—	448	—	320	—	—	—	479	12
162	126	—	—	151	—	349	—	260	—	—	—	391	—
163	127	—	—	89	—	—	—	138	—	—	—	—	—
164	—	—	—	12	—	21	—	18	—	—	—	25	—
165	128	—	11	42	—	64	—	63	—	—	—	67	65 <sup>2</sup>
166	129	—	—	—	—	—	—	98	—	—	—	—	—
167	130	—	—	—	—	—	—	83	—	—	—	—	—
168	131	23	—	—	—	43	—	38	—	—	—	46	—
169	—	—	47	113	—	235	3	—	44	—	—	—	—
170	170	116	40	—	—	290	—	220	58	—	—	330	89
171	171	—	76	—	—	7	—	5	—	—	—	6	91
172	115	—	—	—	—	445	—	324	—	—	—	—	62
173	116	94	6	—	—	231	—	168	—	—	—	270	69
174	117	—	—	114	—	237	—	181	—	—	—	277	—

# Table of Manuscripts and Editions

C	ACB	B	Chr	F	G	N	Q	R	R <sup>1</sup>	Rem	S	W	Ftz
175	118	156	—	162	—	447	—	321	—	—	5	475	—
176	119	—	—	—	—	393	—	293	—	—	—	435	—
177	120	—	82	—	—	—	—	32	—	—	—	—	—
178	—	—	108	—	—	315	—	238	52	—	—	347	—
179	121	—	—	20	—	29	—	28	—	9	—	33	—
180	122	—	—	173	—	—	—	312	—	—	—	460	—
181	143	—	—	—	—	—	—	211	—	—	—	—	—
182	144	—	—	103	—	—	—	155	36	—	—	—	—
183	145	—	—	—	—	—	—	112	—	—	—	—	—
184	146	—	—	—	—	—	—	46	—	—	—	—	—
185	147	—	—	—	—	291	—	223	—	—	—	331	—
186	148	—	—	—	—	293	—	215	—	—	—	—	—
187	—	—	—	—	—	449	—	322	—	—	—	480	—
188	—	—	85	31	—	—	—	40	—	—	—	126	78
189	149	—	—	74	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
190	—	41	83	48	—	95	—	70	—	—	—	96	72
191	—	134	43	—	—	363	—	269	—	—	—	408	72
192	—	—	—	103	—	199	—	154	35	—	—	243	15
193	132	—	—	—	—	145	—	120	—	—	—	167	—
194	133	127	—	147	—	342	—	256	—	—	—	381	—
195	134	—	—	—	—	205	—	—	37	—	—	246	—
196	135	—	—	71	—	132	—	103	—	—	—	158	—
197	136	85	8	96	—	191	—	149	—	—	—	—	—
198	137	82	—	92	—	—	—	147	—	—	—	210	—
199	138	—	—	—	—	—	—	102	—	—	—	—	—
200	139	—	—	136	—	334	—	248	—	8	—	—	—
201	140	—	—	—	—	298	—	213	—	—	—	335	—
202	141	3	74	4	—	12	—	1	—	—	—	11	—
203	142	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
204	—	—	—	—	—	326	—	244	—	—	—	367	45 <sup>1</sup>
205	150	—	—	—	—	—	—	232	—	—	—	339	—
206	151	—	—	—	—	—	—	11	—	—	—	—	—
207	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	93	—	—	—	230	—

# Omar Khayyám

C	ACB	B	Chr	F	G	N	Q	R	R <sup>1</sup>	Rem	S	W	Ftz
208	152	73	—	83	—	176	—	133	—	—	—	191	41
209	153	—	17	69	—	—	1	115	—	—	10	—	—
210	—	—	—	—	—	41	—	34	—	—	—	45	—
211	154	67	—	79	—	153	—	123	—	—	—	174	6
212	155	—	—	—	—	356	—	265	—	—	—	398	—
213	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	503	—
214	156	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
215	157	—	—	—	—	325	—	242	—	—	—	366	23
216	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	122	—	—	—	—	—
217	158	—	—	—	—	101	—	76	—	—	—	102	—
218	—	—	—	26	—	42	—	33	—	—	—	—	—
219	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	9	—	—	—	—
220	—	—	119	—	—	422	—	307	—	—	—	—	—
221	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	52	—	—	—	—	—
222	159	91	16	—	—	200	—	163	32	—	—	244	—
223	160	—	—	—	—	161	—	127	—	—	—	179	—
224	—	—	120	—	—	410	—	298	—	—	—	450	—
225	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	191	—	—	—	—	—
226	161	—	89	8	—	70	—	9	—	—	—	73	23
227	—	—	—	100	—	197	—	150	—	—	—	241	—
228	162	—	—	145	—	340	—	251	—	—	—	379	99
229	163	—	—	112	—	—	10	—	—	—	—	—	—
230	—	—	107	—	—	299	—	235	—	—	—	—	—
231	164	—	—	—	—	—	—	107	—	—	—	224	—
232	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	229	—	—	—	352	—
233	—	7	66	6	—	18	—	8	—	—	—	22	—
234	—	—	—	—	—	256	—	194	—	—	—	297	—
235	165	—	—	—	—	380	—	281	—	—	—	421	—
236	—	139	—	156	—	382	—	282	—	14	—	—	—
237	—	—	—	—	—	426	—	327	61	—	—	463	—
238	—	—	—	—	—	130	—	100	—	—	—	156	—
239	—	9	38	15	—	28	—	20	—	—	—	32	36
240	—	—	99	—	—	163	—	128	—	—	—	181	—

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# Table of Manuscripts and Editions

C	ACB	B	Chr	F	G	N	Q	R	R <sup>1</sup>	Rcm	S	W	Ftz
241	166	102	3	116	—	242	—	186	—	—	—	282	42
242	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	79	—	—	—	—	—
243	151	—	—	—	—	199	—	—	—	—	—	239	—
244	—	27	59	33	—	48	—	43	—	—	—	51	—
245	—	136	—	155	—	366	—	272	—	—	—	411	14 <sup>3</sup>
246	—	—	—	—	—	458	—	329	—	—	—	487	—
247	—	43	46	49	—	—	—	48	—	—	—	104	19
248	—	—	—	—	—	185	—	144	—	—	—	200	—
249	167	—	—	—	—	147	—	116	—	—	—	—	—
250	168	—	—	—	—	—	—	75	—	—	—	103	—
251	—	—	103	—	—	—	—	159	31	—	—	—	—
252	41	—	—	—	—	346	—	243	—	—	—	384	—

